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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts—October 4, 1975, 50 cents

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on

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from Washington
October 4, 1975

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Alice in Welfareland

"Whom God hath joined together," warns the Bible majestically, "let no man put asunder!" Nonsense, says the \$130-billion-a-year federal welfare system, we are putting tens of thousands of husbands and wives asunder every month. You can't believe it; how is it done? Simple enough, by paying a disruptive "desertion bonus" to a poor man who knows that the family gets more without him than with him.

"The subcommittee found," a House committee under Martha Griffiths reported last December, "that in July, 1972 a man with a wife and two children who worked at two dollars an hour could increase the income of his family by an average of \$2158 annually by deserting them."

Yes, since 1959 the proportion of families without a father has risen 50 percent. It now constitutes a majority of poor families with children. An accident? Not according to the evidence. The arrant neglect of the male-headed families, and the poor devil of a husband trying to support his children at low wages full time "appear to have *created*" (their italics) "more female-headed families with children."

If one thing cries for reform today in Washington it is the top-heavy income security-welfare system. It is a horrifying mess. Social security faces a funding crisis; it is stretched too thin; it gives out more than it is taking in. The six-billion-dollar-a-year food stamp program with 19 million participants may have slowed down but, on the other hand, unpublished theoretical studies indicate that by next year 50 million Americans will be eligible, costing \$10 billion in the Bicentennial year if they all apply (which of course they won't). There are already

62 separate aid programs and Congress keeps thinking up new gadgets for the crazy structure piecemeal, categorical goodies: housing allowances, transportation stamps for the elderly, clothing vouchers and fuel coupons for the poor—anything but cash. You can't give cash to poor people; they might know better what they need than the government. Let them have food stamps and stand in line!

Somebody said a camel looks like an animal shaped by a committee; the American security program is shaped by 21 committees of Congress, 50 state legislatures and 1500 county welfare departments. It started as a log cabin and turned into a skyscraper with the log cabin architecturally incorporated. It started 40 years ago, when Franklin Roosevelt signed the original Social Security Act, August 14, 1935, embracing only two programs, old age insurance and unemployment insurance. America was far behind other large industrial nations in welfare then and it is today; we are practically the only one left without national health insurance (urged by Truman and defeated by the American Medical Association). The difficulties of progress have never been more visible than in the failure to streamline and harmonize the fragmented parts in 40 years.

A lot of poor families make a net gain in income of a couple of thousand dollars if the father deserts. Then the mother is eligible for extra benefits—nontaxable. Here's the typical comment of a case-worker in Georgia: "My first criticism is that we run the able-bodied fathers out of the home; they are underemployed, underpaid, and in order for the family to survive the father has to leave home. And now we are spending just about 50 percent of our time trying to find these fathers whom we have run out of homes."

It's funny in a cruel way. A working man in Detroit must earn \$7350 gross to have the equivalent of the relief, food and average medical benefits available to his wife and three children on welfare. As bread winner he has to pay social security taxes; on relief she doesn't. She is tempted to get a job. But tests in New York, Chicago, Atlanta and Los Angeles show that if she has three children and works at median wage she earns less than she would on welfare. She pays \$325 in social security taxes; about \$125 in federal income taxes and close to \$800 in work expenses (bus fare and babysit-

ting.) She stays on relief.

Should the system be abolished? Of course not! If there is one thing that has kept the lid on in America's worst recession it is unemployment insurance, food stamps, aid to families with dependent children, and all the rest. But it is preposterous not to harmonize overlapping programs; they give poor value for money. The subject is a particular thorn for Republicans. Alf Landon called FDR's plan a "cruel hoax"; "a fraud on the working man." He carried only two states. President Ford, as he rambles about the country, telling us to take government out of government, is aware of the problem. He told an audience (Chicago, August 31) that "there has to be a total revamping of the welfare program." Correct, splendid; and he is a compassionate man who twice voted in the House for Nixon's still-born Family Assistance Program. But when he gets before a Republican audience (Dallas, Sept. 13) he says "social programs literally threaten our whole economy" and that he will use the veto "again and again and again." A black woman in St. Louis asked if he had any new social programs to help the poor. He replied (Sept. 12) that what would help more would be a healthy economy—the tax base would expand and everyone would be better off. Sometimes he's for reform; sometimes for business revival.

Studies show that a lot of people who need aid most aren't getting it. Geographical inequalities defy rationality. Maximum AFDC payments for a family of four in 1974 were \$60 a month in Mississippi; \$411 in New York. Why is New York City broke? One reason is New York State's social payments: they attract migrants from all over the country. NYC is full of Puerto Ricans; no wonder, Puerto Rico pays \$56 monthly in AFDC, New York seven times as much. Perverse incentives cause migration and disrupt families.

What should be done? Sooner or later everybody in the country, rich and poor alike, will file income taxes, and those below the poverty line will get a moderate direct cash grant from the government related to income, while the low and moderate-income workers will get tax relief. Why not cash on a uniform basis instead of food stamps and payments that drive husbands from home? Conservative economist Milton Friedman says it would be cheaper, and many in Congress agree.

Television presents the many faces of the American woman.

Television has long remembered Mama and loved Lucy.

But today's television recognizes that women have also helped shape America's history and culture. And women are making greater contributions than ever to television—on camera and off.

For example, during October and November, you'll be seeing *First Ladies' Diaries: Martha Washington*. *Babe*, a portrait of sports immortal Babe Didrikson Zaharias. *Sounder*, Emmy-winning Cicely Tyson's portrayal of the struggles and spiritual triumph of a black woman. And a

documentary on the role and status of European women.

More and more women are on camera broadcasting the news. And behind the scenes gathering it. They're executives, writers and technicians. And, more than ever, stars of their own shows.

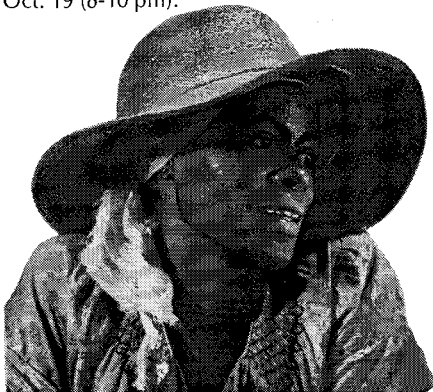
So here's to Cicely and Carol, Barbara and Mary. To Rhoda and Fay, Maude and Cher and Dinah. To the lawyers, doctors, and women in blue. And to all the others who bring wisdom and laughter and a proud sense of their potential and achievement to all of us.

Fear on Trial. Factual account of John Henry Faulk's blacklisting in 1950's. Thursday, Oct. 2 (9-11 pm).

Country Music Association Awards. Honors outstanding achievements in country music field. Monday, Oct. 13 (10-11 pm).

What's It All About? What's Communism All About?; What's a City All About? Documentaries for young viewers. Saturdays, Oct. 18; Nov. 22 (1:30-2 pm).

A Home of Our Own. True drama of priest who founded "Our Little Brothers and Sisters" shelters, based on security, love, work and responsibility. Sunday, Oct. 19 (8-10 pm).



Sounder, starring Cicely Tyson

Special Treat. Soul and Symphony—Detroit Symphony explains musical forms. Tuesday, Oct. 21 (4-5 pm). **Fuji**—Hang-gliding in Japan. Tuesday, Nov. 11 (4-5 pm)

First Ladies' Diaries: Martha Washington. Second in series on Presidents' wives. Thursday, Oct. 23 (1:30-3 pm).

Babe. Life of great athlete Babe Didrikson Zaharias. Thursday, Oct. 23 (9-11 pm).

The Weekend Athlete. ABC News Closeup examines problems of middle-aged athlete. Thursday, Oct. 23 (10-11 pm)

Sounder. Acclaimed film of Southern black family during the Depression. Friday, Oct. 24 (9-11 pm).

The Missiles of October. ABC Theatre—Dramatic account of confrontation between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. Sunday, Oct. 26 (9 pm-midnight).

Life. First of three-part series, "Life, Liberty, Pursuit of Happiness." David Brinkley evaluates Americans' lives and Jeffersonian ideals. Tuesday, Oct. 28 (8-9:30 pm). Special children's version Saturday, Nov. 1 (12:30-1 pm).

You're A Good Sport, Charlie Brown. New story by Charles M. Schulz. Tuesday, Oct. 28 (8:30-9 pm).

We Interrupt This Broadcast! Re-creation of Orson Welles' broadcast of H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*. Friday, Oct. 31 (9-11 pm).

Eric. Hallmark Hall of Fame—Factual story of young man's struggle against cancer. Monday, Nov. 10 (9-11 pm).

The Grand Ole Opry at 50. Hal Holbrook hosts Nashville celebration of unique American institution. Tuesday, Nov. 11 (8:30-10 pm).

ABC Afterschool Special. Wednesday, Nov. 19 (4:30-5:30 pm).

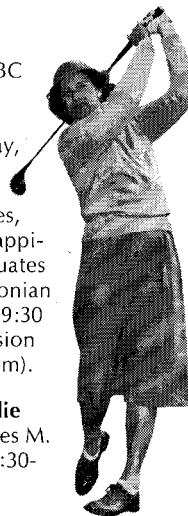
CBS Reports: The Assassins. First of 3 inquiries into political assassinations. Thursday, Nov. 20 (Time TBA).

A Man For All Seasons. Oscar-winning film starring Paul Scofield. Thursday, Nov. 27 (12:30-3 pm).

Living Free. Sequel to *Born Free*. Thursday, Nov. 27 (8-10 pm).

NBC News Special. The Social Security structure and how it works. Thursday, Nov. 27 (10-11 pm).

Steve and Eydie: Our Love is Here to Stay. Tribute to the music and lyrics of the Gershwins. Thursday, Nov. 27 (10-11 pm).



Babe

Winnie the Pooh and Tigger Too.

A.A. Milne's charming children's classic. Friday, Nov. 28 (8-8:30 pm).

Consumerism. Boon or Bust? ABC News Closeup on consumer achievements. Saturday, Nov. 29 (10-11 pm).

A Determining Force. Documentary on role of women in European society. Sunday, Nov. 30 (5:30-6:30 pm).

The Legend of Valentino. Franco Nero portrays the silent film idol. Two hours. Date to be announced.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED PROGRAMS

Monday through Friday: Sunrise Semester/CBS Morning News/The Today Show/AM America/Captain Kangaroo/Sesame Street/Mister Rogers/Electric Company/Villa Alegre

Saturday: In the News/Schoolhouse Rock/Emergency + 4/Land of the Lost/The Shazam-Isis Hour/Westwind/Lost Saucer/Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids/GO-USA/CBS Children's Film Festival/Weekend (first Saturday each month).



First Ladies' Diaries: Martha Washington **Sunday:** Vegetable Soup/In the News/Schoolhouse Rock/Lamp Unto My Feet/Look Up and Live/Camera Three/These Are the Days/Make A Wish/Face the Nation/Meet the Press/Directions/Issues and Answers/The Wonderful World of Disney/Nova/Masterpiece Theatre

Note: This is, necessarily, a partial listing. Time (NYT), titles and casts of these national programs are subject to change. Please consult your station listings; check also for noteworthy local programs.

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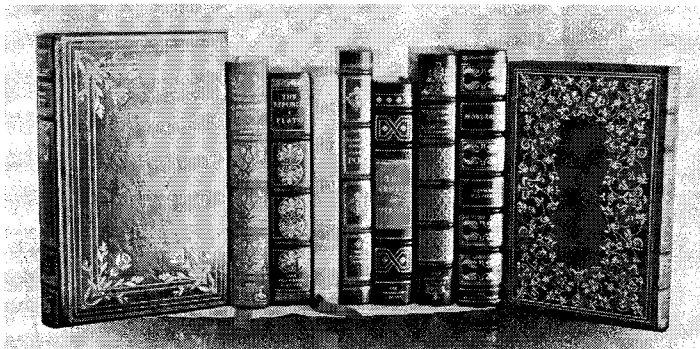
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Fat Cats' Nine Lives

The Republican national finance committee attracted virtually no attention when it announced in August that an Elkhart, Indiana businessman named M.W. (Bill) Deitch had been appointed to the position of vice chairman for "leadership giving." Deitch, as it happened, lasted in his new job only a month but the issue of leadership giving remains. Traditionally it has been a euphemism for the very largest campaign contributions, often running into five or even six figures.

For the GOP and anyone who must raise substantial amounts of money to finance the 1976 contests for House and Senate seats, the presidency and the vice presidency, there are unprecedented difficulties to be faced in the coming year, most of them attributable to a host of new restrictions, contribution limitations and spending ceilings contained in the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 and a series of amendments to that law enacted in 1974.

Those statutes are supposed to have brought an end to the era of "fat cat" influence in politics by limiting, for the first time in the nation's history, the amount of money a candidate for federal office can receive from an individual (\$1000) or from a political committee (\$5000). But the sparse language in the formal announcement of Deitch's appointment offers a hint of where the new generation of "fat cats" can be found: "Deitch's volunteer responsibilities will include working with individual Republican contributors and with political action committees. Deitch also will assist companies and professional trade and other organizations in establishing new political action committees. . . ."

Corporation-sponsored political action committees are hardly a new phenomenon on the political scene. For at least the past 15 years, some companies have maintained "good citizenship" or "dollars for democracy" programs, encouraging employees to give to the candidates of their choice. In most cases, however, those efforts involved little more than the solicitation of voluntary donations as part of a "good government" exercise designed to show that the companies involved were living up to their "civic responsibility."

Well hidden during that same period were other means of generating far more substantial amounts of cash for corporations' favored political candidate. Most of those schemes were operated in

blatant violation of the federal law that has prohibited, since 1908, the use of corporate funds to finance any campaign for federal office. In some companies, the preferred device involved the transfer of hundreds of thousands of dollars into a foreign subsidiary or to an overseas "consultant" for the purpose of "laundering" the money, followed by the covert return of the funds to the US for under-the-table distribution to "friends" seeking public office. In other firms, the favored technique involved assigning executives to make ostensibly voluntary political contributions from their personal checking accounts, with the money reimbursed to them from the company treasury in the guise of end-of-the-year bonuses.

A series of developments during the past two years has brought a halt to many of those practices. Numerous investigations stemming from the Watergate scandal gave the public a rare view of the dark side of campaign financing, a development that coincided with growing citizen hostility toward the nation's major corporations. Most of the leading companies in the aerospace, petroleum and commercial aviation industries, as well as dozens of firms in other fields, were either publicly humiliated or convicted on criminal charges as a result of their illicit campaign financing activities. At the same time, the Federal Election Commission, created by the 1974 law, has shown itself initially to be an enthusiastic watchdog. The Justice Department has displayed renewed interest in prosecuting law violations, after decades of purposeful inaction on the part of bureaucrats who knew that every case of illegal contributions had to involve a politician—and that recipient often was an influential member of Congress whom the department did not wish to antagonize. Finally the Internal Revenue Service has announced that it is investigating more than 100 companies for possible tax law violations in connection with illegal contributions.

All of this has produced pressure on the business community to find a new means of maintaining its financial support of favored political candidates that will afford at least the cloak of legality. Hundreds of companies and trade associations now have established political action committees or other programs similar to those promoted for many years, with only nominal success, by the Chamber of Commerce of the United States and the National Association of Manufacturers. The resurgence of the political action committee as a serious fund-raising vehicle (as opposed to the "good government" role it played in earlier years) is due, in great measure, to the changes in the law during the past four years. The 1971 statute maintained the prohibition against the use of corporate money in federal elections but it also authorized, for the first time, the use of corporate or union funds for "the establishment, administration and solicitation of contributions to a separate segregated fund to be used for political

purposes by a corporation or labor organization." A companion section of the law continued to pose problems, however, because it prohibited contributions made "directly or indirectly" by any government contractor, a category including virtually all major corporations. That conflict was resolved by the 1974 amendments, which included language authorizing government contractors to also use corporate funds to set up and run "separate, segregated funds."

The Washington press corps "discovered" the growing popularity of those political action committees during August, when the Sun Oil Co. asked the Federal Election Commission for an advisory opinion on the legality and propriety of two techniques it planned to use in soliciting political contributions from company officials and other white collar employees. In fact Sun's proposed fund-raising schemes were virtually identical to those of other corporations, and the oil company's only distinction was that it requested an advisory opinion on the matter.

The first program suggested by Sun involves a "separate, segregated fund" in the form of a political action committee. One reason many corporations prefer this variation is that it allows a company's executives to maintain considerable control over the operation. Company funds can be used to pay all administrative costs and the fund-raising committee typically is headed by officers of the "government relations" or "public affairs" departments of the firm involved. The other plan proposed by Sun involves what is known as a "trustee" bank account. This technique calls for the company to make arrangements with a bank to establish a checking account for any company employee willing to join a fund-raising plan. All participants authorize the deduction of a specified amount from their paychecks, with the money automatically transferred to the special bank accounts.

Less than a week after Sun wrote to the Federal Election Commission, TRW, Inc., a major aerospace firm, requested a commission opinion of a third variation, under which participating employees designate the candidates of their choice and the amount they wish each politician to receive. The contributions then are deducted from each employee's pay and consolidated into one check for each office-seeker involved.

In theory all of those plans rely only on voluntary involvement of corporate executives and management employees. The federal law specifically prohibits the use or threat of "force, job discrimination or financial reprisal" to enroll participants or collect money. In addition there is a legal prohibition against making participation in a fund-raising program "a condition of employment." In fact the political action funds that have been operated by corporations and trade associations during the past decade on a truly voluntary basis have collected pitifully small amounts of money because white collar workers are no different than most other Americans in one crucial respect: they are

not especially interested in donating their money to politicians, even with the advantage of being able to secure a credit or deduction for their contribution when preparing their federal income tax.

The Chamber of Commerce, which traditionally has taken a see-no-evil position about all corporate political activities, insists that no pressure is being applied to induce participation in any fund-raising program. "In every case that I know of, the corporate people are bending over backward to make sure there is no coercion," Robert C. Griebner, the Chamber's director of political participation programs, told a news briefing a few weeks ago. "Companies are doing everything they can to emphasize that it [participation] is not a condition of employment and that it does not affect chances of advancement within the corporation," added Stanley T. Kaleczyc, the Chamber's assistant general counsel.

But even as Griebner and Kaleczyc were offering those assurances, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* was in the midst of printing a series of highly revealing articles about a supposedly voluntary "trustee" bank account scheme operated for many years by the Monsanto Co. The newspaper found several employees who said they indeed had been "coerced" and "pressured" into joining. One man said he was told by a supervisor to consider participation as "part of employment" if he "wanted to get back on the promotions list." Another said he was specifically told by his boss that enrollment was "not voluntary." Others said they joined to make sure they were considered part of the "corporate team."

The newspaper's investigation also destroyed the notion that the individuals who controlled the bank accounts made the sole decision about which politicians should receive assistance and how much should be given. "The [Monsanto] lobbyists suggested the names of candidates to whom the executives were encouraged to contribute, and the precise dollar amounts of the contributions," the *Post-Dispatch* reported. "Often the candidates suggested by the lobbyists have been out-of-state politicians whom the St. Louis-based executives making the contributions never heard of."

(The *Miami Herald* found last year that candidates for Florida's state legislature were receiving contributions from Monsanto employees living in New Jersey, Connecticut and other states a thousand or more miles away. That newspaper concluded that "much of the money goes to candidates hand-picked by three men in the company's government affairs department," but Monsanto at the time denied any such plot. The distant donors probably knew the candidates on the basis of earlier assignments in Florida, a company spokesman explained prior to the latest round of disclosures.)

Finally the *Post-Dispatch* reported that Monsanto's chief Washington lobbyist could covertly check on whether his "suggestions" were being followed because until at least 1970 he received copies of the supposedly confidential individual bank statements even before

they were sent to the company employees.

The potential for similar abuses exists in virtually all other corporate programs, and only the most politically naive outsider would believe that a new generation of corporate giving programs can collect the requisite millions of dollars by relying only on voluntary participation.

One indication of the ambitious goals of some of the corporate programs came during a by-invitation-only meeting convened by the National Association of Manufacturers last June at New York City's fashionable Racquet and Tennis Club. Approximately 100 executives there heard Fred K. Quigley Jr., director of government affairs for the Dow Chemical Co., describe how his company hopes to raise \$200,000 to \$300,000 in the first year of operation, with the money to be distributed to candidates for political office in 1976 who are "honest, dedicated to the free enterprise system and have a record of fiscal responsibility."

Quigley's government affairs department, with an annual budget of three million dollars, will spend much money to establish and operate the fund, and its officials will be highly influential in deciding what candidates receive donations from the political action committees. The company will have seven such committees, each encompassing a region of the country—a device that will allow Dow to legally circumvent the intent of the new statute limiting to \$5000 the amount a political committee can donate to a candidate. Dow will be able to contribute as much as \$35,000 to a single politician, although Quigley insists that "that factor didn't even come into our thinking."

In addition there already is considerable talk within business circles about expanding the fund-raising programs to include not only employees but also suppliers and contractors who do business with the sponsoring company—and who would be especially susceptible to even subtle pressure to donate. Moreover the Republican party has been exploring the solicitation of stockholders as "another area that has great possibility."

Among all of the nation's major corporations, only E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Co. is known to have voluntarily instituted a comprehensive program designed specifically to emphasize to both its employees and the public that it is serious in its determination to avoid corporate involvement in any illegal activities relating to campaign financing. Under the direction of the company's board chairman, Irving S. Shapiro, du Pont's board of directors has voted to establish a public register in which all of the corporation's principal officers are being asked to record any solicitation for a political donation of one dollar or more and any campaign contributions they make, regardless of the amount. Among those being requested to make such reports are members of the company's executive committee, its vice presidents and general managers

and members of its Washington office staff. Although corporate contributions are not prohibited in some state and local elections, the disclosure program applies to those contests as well.

The du Pont program is not foolproof, but it is distinguished by the fact that no other corporation appears interested in even making a similar effort. A comment made by the Chamber of Commerce's Griebner reflects the coolness of the business community toward the concept of maximum public disclosure: "To go to the nth degree that du Pont is going—I'm not saying it's right or wrong, but it's going to take a lot of work and it's going to cost a lot of money." In fact du Pont's approach is undoubtedly much cheaper, in absolute costs and in comparison to the price other companies will pay when what happened to Monsanto happens to them.

Carey McWilliams

Though *The Nation* and *The New Republic* are often mentioned in the same breath, there has not been between the two magazines—in recent years at least—any concrete demonstration of journalistic fraternity. Nor has the competitive spirit much infected the political siblings. *The New Republic*, now more than 60 years old, and *The Nation*, which had its centenary a decade ago, have been content to share a special audience committed to egalitarian values. It is not true, however, that the two weeklies have been without effect on one another. Carey McWilliams' tenure as editor of *The Nation* has had and will continue to influence the editors of *The New Republic*. For all of our differences, stylistic and substantive, he has been a reference point for what is just.

After more than a generation at the head of the "other" liberal weekly, McWilliams has decided to go into active retirement and write. Readers of his *Factories in the Field*, *Brothers Under the Skin*, *Mask for Privilege*, *Witchhunt* may now look forward to new books as scrupulous and vivid as these; this is consolation for those of us who will miss the steady moral rudder of McWilliams' mind as an editor. A man of the left, McWilliams was captive of no faction, beguiled by no doctrinaire cause. But he was notably intrepid during our second "Red scare," when simple common sense came to require special courage. It did take *The Nation* and others of us too long to fully perceive the cruelties of communism. Characteristically, McWilliams is as rough on himself on this score as he is on those, many in number, who would still have it that one or another of the superpowers is worthy of being considered the chosen vessel of mankind's hopes.

The Nation will not be the same after McWilliams leaves.

Punishing Innocents

Peter Fine (the name is changed) was arrested near his Brooklyn home late one Thursday afternoon and charged with theft from an interstate shipment. An FBI agent took him to the federal detention center in Manhattan, where he was told he could call his lawyer. Fine didn't have a lawyer. He called his wife and told her he was in jail. Mrs. Fine called a half dozen friends before she could find a lawyer who handles criminal cases.

Fine stayed in jail overnight. The next day the FBI agent took him to federal court in handcuffs. His wife and new lawyer were there. Since Mr. Fine had no criminal record and was a family man with a job, he was released on a \$10,000 personal recognizance bond. This meant he had only to sign a piece of paper promising to pay the government \$10,000 if he failed to appear in court. Peter Fine's lawyer charged him a retainer of \$3000 and said it could cost as much as \$7000 more if his case went to trial. The Fines borrowed the money from friends to whom, with some embarrassment, they explained the reason for the loan.

The case dragged on. The lawyer told the Fines it was important to hire a private investigator as soon as possible. He was able to find one who would charge only \$750 for the necessary work. The Fines paid it and waited. The waiting was intolerable.

It happens that Peter Fine was innocent. An overzealous federal agent had made a mistake. Nearly three months after his arrest, Mr. Fine's lawyer was able to convince the assistant US attorney to drop the case. It also happens that the Fines were lower-middle class people, with insignificant savings and a few substantial debts. The sudden \$3750 expense hurt badly. Mrs. Fine told her lawyer that since the government had made a mistake, it should at least pay the Fines' legal costs. The lawyer smiled and said that, unfortunately, that wasn't the way it worked.

Rep. Edward Koch and six co-sponsors have introduced a bill in the House of Representatives that would make Mrs. Fine right. It would allow federal judges to award criminal defendants who are not convicted (and in some cases even convicted ones) a reasonable attorney's fee. The decision whether to award a fee would be up to the trial judge and subject to appellate review. Among the factors the judge would consider in making his decision are the amount of money the defendant had to pay for his legal defense, the strength of the government's case, whether the government was justified in prosecuting the case at all, and whether the defendant avoided conviction only on a technicality. If the Koch bill becomes law, people like the Fines will get back most or all of their legal expenses.

The bill (H.R. 6296) deserves support not only because it would correct the obvious injustice in the case of Mr. Fine, but for two other reasons as well.

First, as things are now, a poor person in Mr. Fine's position would get free counsel whether he's guilty or innocent. A wealthy person can absorb the legal fee—in some cases it might even be tax-deductible. People in the middle suffer most. They must pay their own lawyer and the amount is likely to surprise them. The competent defense of even a minor criminal charge can cost \$2000. Serious cases, involving difficult legal questions and complicated facts, can cost more than \$15,000 for the trial alone. Appeals are more.

A second reason the bill has merit is that it puts defendants in the same position as the government. Under current law, a federal judge can make a convicted defendant repay the government its costs in prosecuting him. The Koch bill simply gives defendants the same opportunity.

It is not hard for an innocent person to get caught up in the labyrinthine criminal justice system, though it is usually hard to get out. Police and prosecutors, like all of us, do make mistakes. Sometimes they are careless. Proposals for *judicare* and legal insurance are among the ways to increase access to the courts. But they are limited in the number of people they will cover and the extent of the coverage. H.R. 6296, on the other hand, applies to all persons who don't qualify for free counsel. It assures, at the very least, that the expense of a successful criminal defense will not cause the defendant as much suffering as the sentence he or she would likely have received if convicted.

Stephen Gillers & Norman Dorsen

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White House Watch

Shooting at Ford

Back in August, well before Lynette Fromme aimed a .45 caliber pistol at the President in Sacramento and the woman who calls herself Sara Jane Moore fired a .38 revolver at him in San Francisco, some of Mr. Ford's senior assistants looked over the schedule that he had approved for the next four weeks, with one to four-day trips out of Washington every weekend and a midweek, 12-stop campaign dash through New Hampshire in behalf of a Republican candidate for the Senate, and told him that he just couldn't do it. The assistants' concern was not for the President's safety. It was rather that he was about to over-strain himself and a White House staff that was being gradually reduced, invite a suspicion that he was neglecting work that he ought to

be doing in Washington, and—this last more implied than stated—defeat his purposes by making it distressingly clear that he really didn't have enough to say that was worth saying so many times in so many places. A participant in discussions in which these points were put to the President recalls the argument and the response as follows: "Some of us got after him as soon as we saw it all laid out and said, look, you've got something scheduled every weekend and you just can't do that and he said in effect, the hell I can't. He was damned if he was going to cancel any of the commitments that he'd already made. But he sort of sheepishly, ruefully is probably the right word, agreed that maybe he'd better not add any more."

Others who discussed the subject with the President understood that he'd agreed and committed himself to a good deal more. They understood that he'd promised to cut back substantially on presidential travel in October and November, and they professed to be ready to argue hard and seriously with him and with the two assistants principally responsible for preparing his schedules, Staff Chief Donald Rumsfeld and Jerry Jones, a Nixon holdover (like Rumsfeld) who had recently been staff secretary and lately had been put in overall charge of scheduling by Rumsfeld, if the originally modest October travel plans were significantly increased. These advocates of reduced travel and exposure to the hinterland public had better start arguing. On September 24, two days after the President was fired upon in San Francisco, plans for eight trips from Washington by the end of October, including two that could be accomplished within an afternoon and evening and six requiring a day or more away from the capital, were far enough along in preliminary commitment to have been submitted to Mr. Ford for his approval. They could and at this writing were expected at the White House to take him to Illinois, Nebraska, West Virginia, New Jersey, North Carolina, Tennessee, Michigan, Kansas, Florida, Georgia and Alabama and finally back to California, where within 17 September days he had twice been close to assassination.

"We've got a lot of amateur security experts around right now," an assistant to the President who is also a close and long-time friend remarked, referring to the professional libertarians in the White House press corps who at the daily news briefings indicated by their questions that they were suddenly for requiring the Secret Service and local police to lock up everybody who might be suspected of designs upon his safety and life. Having no pretensions to that kind of expertise, I stick to what the President and his spokesmen, Press Secretary Ron Nessen and Staff Chief Rumsfeld, have said on the subject and matters related to it since Lynette Fromme thrust a .45 Colt within a few feet of Mr. Ford's face in Sacramento on September 5. The comments amount to an interesting study in the attitudes and personality of Gerald Ford and in the collective attitudes and personality of his White House

establishment.

At Sacramento, less than three hours after (in his words) he had seen "a hand coming up behind several others in the front row and obviously there was a gun in that hand," the President said to reporters and TV cameras: "This incident under no circumstances will preclude me from contacting the American people as I travel from one state to another and from one community to another. In my judgment, it is vitally important for a President to see the American people, and I am going to continue to have that personal contact and relationship with the American people." Listening to him in the hotel lobby where he spoke, I thought he was pale and his voice was shaky, although later on the tube he looked and sounded firm. Remarks prepared for delivery at a White House seminar in St. Louis had him saying: "Only by going around the country to meetings like this, by meeting people face to face and listening to what they have to say, can you really learn what people feel and what they think. Doing this is an important part of my job. I have no intention of abdicating that responsibility. I have no intention of allowing the government of the people to be held hostage at the point of a gun." Mr. Ford offended newspaper and electronic reporters who in early accounts had emphasized the last sentence of the foregoing passage when he omitted the entire statement from his delivered remarks—because, he said, he wanted to get away from the prepared script and allow more time for questions at the seminar. He actually omitted it, I am told at the White House, because at that time (Sept. 12) he did not want to capitalize upon the Sacramento incident.

At a press conference in his White House office on September 16, the President said to a reporter who expressed doubt that he learned anything from his prized contacts with people in crowds: "You'd be very much amazed at how often people in the course of shaking hands or greeting them, they will make specific recommendations or comments. It is rather amazing and very encouraging." It's amazing, all right. As a dedicated trudger after Mr. Ford when he in journalism's horrid term "makes the crowd," I have yet to hear anybody say anything to him more informative than "You're doing great, Mr. President." On Air Force One, flying home to Washington after the President was shot at in San Francisco, Donald Rumsfeld said: "I think that political leadership in our country represents people and they have to deal with people and there's no question but that this President and Presidents in years to come will be traveling and meeting people in various ways. It's inevitable. It's part of our system." Five minutes before the midnight of his return to the White House from San Francisco, the President said: "... I don't think any person as President or any person in any other major political office ought to cower in the face of a limited number of people, out of 214 million Americans, who want to take the law into their own

hands. The American people . . . want a dialogue between them and their President and other public officials . . . Under no circumstances will I, and I hope no others, capitulate to those that want to undercut what's all good in America."

During repeated, prolonged and futile efforts in the White House press room to get Ron Nessen to modify the line thus set by the President, one of the few productive questions asked was whether Mr. Ford's public assertions of refusal to "capitulate" might incite rather than deter the kind of people who in California had threatened to shoot and had shot at the President. Nessen, reading from notes that he had prepared after discussing the San Francisco episode and its implications with Mr. Ford, answered: "The President feels that his travel and his demeanor and the things he's said publicly, to him at least do not represent any kinds of actions or remarks that could be considered as flaunting himself or his office in front of people who might belong to this tiny minority, nor does he feel that anything he's said or done represents in any way a dare or an egging on of these individuals." Presumably without intending to do so, Vice President Rockefeller said something that could be taken as a commentary upon the Ford-Nessen posture. The Vice President said: "Let's stop talking about it. Let's stop putting it on front pages and on television. Psychiatrists say every time there is any publicity, it is stimulating to the unstable." Rockefeller then proceeded to say essentially what the President had been saying, in these words: "Let's not give up what we've got for a miniscule of society. This is the big deal of the moment. Let's not panic. Let's keep an open society."

Ranking assistants who discuss the problem of public appearance and contact with the President say that he truly and deeply believes what he says about the necessity of any President's access to the public. After the shooting in San Francisco, the first reaction of one such assistant was a fear that it might drive the President to retract the concessions that he had reluctantly made to security after the threat in Sacramento, rather than appear to be "capitulating." The pattern of Mr. Ford's behavior on the road since Sacramento suggests that he will display more caution and allow more caution to be exercised in his behalf in the near future. With a few exceptions on the trip that ended with the unforgettable *crack* of Sara Moore's .38 in San Francisco, the President confined his crowd contacts to airports. For one day only, on the New Hampshire trip, he wore a discernible and obviously uncomfortable protective vest. He ventured no public walks, even for short distances, of the kind he was taking when Lynette Fromme's hand with the gun in it rose before him. My opinion is that he should restrict his presence and his walks to the White House grounds for awhile, maybe until January 20, 1977.

John Osborne

CIA: Denying What's Not in Writing

Nine months after it was set up to investigate the abuses of the intelligence community and weeks after its final report was originally due, the Senate Intelligence Committee finally held its first public hearing. There was an effort to recapture the excitement of the Watergate hearings held in the same Senate caucus room two long years ago. The public broadcasting system provided live TV coverage and nightly summaries, the reporters who covered Watergate were out in force, and the committee chairman, Sen. Frank Church, promised important revelations of CIA lawlessness.

By the third and last day of the hearings the main question was why the committee had chosen to begin its public inquiry with this tale of the unlawful retention of a biological toxin. The spectator section of the hearing room was half empty, many of the reporters had gone to the House committee that was fighting with the White House about the right to release classified information and the senators and committee staff were going through the motions of examining witnesses from the Army Chemical Corporation.

Beneath the surface, however, the three days of hearings were the beginning of a public education into how the CIA functions, how it is controlled from the top, and what might be done to ensure that in the future it is responsive to presidential and congressional directives.

It was Sen. Howard Baker, the only veteran of the Watergate Committee on the intelligence panel, who first raised these issues in questioning CIA Director William Colby about the lack of a paper trail to determine what had happened.

The bare outlines of the story were clear. In 1970 President Nixon ordered the destruction of all biological weapons in the possession of government agencies. Before the materials held at Fort Detrick were destroyed, enough shellfish poison to kill tens of thousands of people was shipped to the CIA and placed in a little-used storeroom. There it remained until a short time ago when its existence was called to the attention of CIA Director Colby who in turn notified the Church Committee.

Subsequent investigation revealed that no written order had ever been issued within the CIA directing the destruction of biological weapons and no senior official had ever asked for or received confirmation of their destruction. All that the committee could establish in its investigation and public hearings was that a middle level official had decided not to destroy the toxin because of its great potential value and because it was not in his view clearly covered by the presidential order. That official, Dr. Nathan Gordon, who was responsible

for biological material within the CIA technical services division, told the committee that he had received no written directive from his superiors to destroy the toxins.

That was as far as the committee could get. Former Director of Central Intelligence Richard Helms and his Deputy for Covert Operations, Thomas Karamessines, told the committee that they had agreed that the toxins should be destroyed and had passed the order orally to Dr. Sidney Gottlieb, director of the technical services division. Dr. Gottlieb was reported by the committee counsel, F.A.O. Schwarz III, to be planning to take the Fifth Amendment and he was not called to testify.

As one frustrated senator after another noted, the committee was left in maddening uncertainty. Did Helms order the toxins to be stored away in a written directive (since destroyed) or orally? Did his deputy? Did they want them destroyed? Did they assume they had not been? Was the CIA lax in not seeing that a presidential directive, subsequently affirmed in an international treaty, was carried out or was this a deliberate policy?

With amazing discipline the senators and the staff stuck to the subject of biological weapons, resisting the temptation the Watergate Committee often succumbed to, of asking questions on other subjects. Only Sen. Baker strayed once to provide a revealing glimpse into the months of secret hearings that the committee has held on assassinations. The Tennessee Republican noted that the absence of a paper trail had been characteristic of all of the committee's investigations of possible assassinations. Did this, he asked Colby, reflect the agency policy of plausible denial? Did not the agency's own inspector general's report indicate that it was not possible to determine who was responsible for assassination plans because written records did not exist? Colby sought to turn the question aside noting that plausible denial was used in reference to foreign governments—the agency had to be able to deny to the world that it had a role in a particular operation. Like many CIA procedures, "plausible denial" has now been imported to the United States.

The failure to destroy the biological toxin may reveal one classic pattern of relations between junior and senior officials of the CIA in operations that are illegal or at best highly questionable. Consider how it must have looked in early 1970. The President has ordered the destruction of all toxins. CIA officials at all levels react with caution. Many presidential decisions are meant to apply to the overt agencies of government and not to the CIA. When the United States, for example, agreed in the Rio Pact not to interfere in the internal affairs of Latin American governments, no one in the White House or the CIA meant that to apply to the agency. Perhaps this is a similar case. Clues from the White House are studied carefully. The director of Central Intelligence gets a copy of the National Security Council decision memorandum ordering the

destruction of all stocks of biological weapons but the memo directs him and others to look to the Secretary of Defense for implementing directives. None is sent to the CIA. There is not a second memorandum from the White House in intelligence channels saying that the NSC decision does or does not apply to the CIA. Was there a phone call from a White House official to Helms saying no one would be angry or surprised if the CIA kept some of this stuff? There is no way to know.

Thus the senior officials of the agency are left, intentionally or not, with ambiguous signals from the White House. They know that this President or some future one may suddenly confront them with an assignment that can be most effectively carried out with biological weapons and yet they are reluctant to violate an order.

At a lower level the official having physical control of the material faces the same problem. What do his bosses want him to do and what should he do? He too looks for clues. He receives no written directive to destroy; regrets no request for an accounting of the material and a report of its destruction. On the other hand, there is no written directive to hold the material. There is no way to tell if there was an oral directive or clear hint, but the lack of instructions to destroy is enough. The "assignment" is to preserve the material; he decides to accept it.

We should not be surprised to learn that the middle level officials considered covering themselves by forcing the director to take responsibility for keeping the toxins. The most interesting document the committee was able to produce was a memorandum drafted to be from Karamessines to Helms but reportedly actually written by Gordon. The committee had only an unsigned carbon and Helms and his deputy both claimed that they had never seen the memo. That it could have been written tells us a good deal about the attitude of agency career officials to obeying presidential orders.

The memorandum begins by noting the presidential order to destroy biological weapons including toxins. It notes that the CIA supply is at Fort Detrick and that, even though it is not on the official inventory list, it might be destroyed when the army destroys its own stocks. The memorandum notes that the CIA program is currently funded at \$75,000 and then ends with this revealing paragraph:

If the Director wishes to continue this special capability, it is recommended that if the above DoD decision is made (to destroy their stocks), the existing agency stockpile at SO Division, Ft. Detrick be transferred to the Huntington Research Center, Becton-Dickinson Company, Baltimore, Maryland. Arrangements have been made for this contingency and assurances have been given by the potential contractor to store and maintain the agency's stockpile at a cost no greater than \$75,000 per annum.

The violation of presidential orders can be carried out within the budget and should be done.

What kind of a monster has America created in which memoranda are written calmly describing for the directors the contingency plans that have been made to violate a presidential order, an agency that's able to violate an order without anybody learning about it for five years? It is an agency that practices plausible denial against the President, the Congress and the public as well as against foreign governments; an agency in which junior officials learn to disobey laws because they think they've received subtle signals from the top. Nothing is in writing so that everything can be denied.

All of this should be kept in mind when we get the long awaited Church Committee report on assassinations and are told that there is no firm evidence of White House or even high agency involvement, and when the committee later in the year holds its hearings on remedies.

Former CIA Director Richard Helms was asked by the panel what could be done to avoid a repetition of this failure to destroy the biological toxin. Helms's answer was delivered so smoothly with such casualness that the committee failed to grasp the extent of the deception. Here was a man who was described in the Rockefeller Commission report as warning Henry Kissinger to treat a document with care because it violated the CIA charter, who wrote memos about the agency's 20-year mail opening program noting that it was a violation of the law, who admitted to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that he had not been completely candid in describing the CIA role in Chile. What was this man's answer to the question of preventing abuse? There was nothing, he said, that could be done about the "odd mistake." If there was a pattern of misbehavior something might be done but nothing could prevent a patriotic man from on one occasion failing to obey orders. That was the price, the American ambassador to Iran suggested, of having honorable patriotic men in charge.

The senators showed by their questions that they were having none of that. They knew that they were confronting massive lawlessness. But their questions revealed also that they remain baffled about how to get at the truth and how to prevent abuses in the future. The manner in which they meet those challenges will determine whether this opening round was pure circus or the beginning of the serious and purposeful inquiry (leading to reform) that the Senate directed, and that the country needs.

Morton H. Halperin

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The "Company"

Banality of Power

With the recent revelations of myopic US intelligence on the outbreak of the October 1973 Middle East war, congressional investigations of the Central Intelligence Agency may be on the scent of one of the agency's most important secrets: its bureaucratic banality. Behind the imperial manner and machinations, the CIA has always belonged more to Max Weber than to Ian Fleming, a hostage to clients, careerism, inertia and root mediocrity.

Understanding the banality as well as the outrages of the CIA (the two are often synonymous) seems essential to authentic reform of US national intelligence operations. Bureaucratic influences account for some of the more serious and ridiculous mistakes of what CIA minions call the "Company." Moreover legislative prohibitions of specific acts such as assassination may be unavailing in the larger policy sense if Congress does not confront at the same time underlying organizational motives which may only reappear in new abuses.

The missed signals on the October war were largely the result of a common bureaucratic phenomenon. Like the Foreign Service, in whose embassy precincts they masquerade, CIA stations abroad are heavily dependent on "client" relationships with their counterparts in host countries. Up to a point, sharing intelligence with friendly powers is simply maximizing channels of information. But as so often happens in the Foreign Service, these relations may tend to obscure the critical boundary between US interests and the client's.

The strength and accuracy of the client's views can affect the standing of the Americans dealing with him, can influence the rationalizations of US officials abroad and the scramble for attention and money in Washington. The CIA has other problems: the credibility of shared intelligence in the past, and the sheer laziness that grows with such dependence. The dangers are worst when the client is also "targeted" at the Soviet Union and thus able to provide information of great interest to Washington. By several accounts, all this made CIA reports from the Middle East in the fall of 1973 particularly vulnerable to the flaws and neglect in Israeli intelligence, whose nearly fatal miscalculations were almost identically reflected in US estimates.

Israel is hardly unique in this respect. For many of the same reasons, US intelligence in the Cyprus crisis was crippled by reliance on the Greek junta, while officials were skeptical of less "reliable" contacts among a more independent Makarios government in Nicosia. If an international race war broke out tomorrow in Southern Africa, CIA intelligence in the region would be similarly blinded by the cozy relations cultivated over the years with the Rhodesian and South African

security services, the outgrowth less of overt racism than of CIA's amoral operational affinity for technically sophisticated clients who also worry (or at least say they do) about Russian trade delegations and Chinese textile engineers. Obviously there is ideology in this problem. Yet if they probe deeply enough, congressional investigators will probably discover the CIA's zeal often owes as much to the "professional" seductions of cliency as to cold war passion.

Ideology may be most easily jettisoned at the agency's higher levels in Washington, where the fate of whole sections, and the careers in them, can depend on staying in the action, often regardless of the political niceties. This constant bureaucratic search for a *raison d'être* is another time-honored motive for policy throughout Washington, and the CIA, however bizarre its methods and purposes, is no exception.

As a member of Henry Kissinger's National Security Council staff in 1969, I was once invited to a lunch at CIA headquarters where a high official discreetly sounded me out about the receptivity of the Nixon White House to a little CIA mercenary operation to save a failing side in a distant civil war. There had been "inklings," as the official put it, that the President actually disagreed with prevailing State Department policy. A quiet operation could be mounted, at minimal cost, of course, to see that the President's "side" got at least an even break—and Secretary of State Rogers and his boys need be none the wiser.

It was a classic twist, worthy of John Le Carré. The CIA, we both knew, was already supporting the *other* side through the auspices of a friendly intelligence system; and the people the agency official was now proposing to help were getting aid from the Chinese Communists and were opposed by most of our allies. The whole war lay far beyond any political or military interest of the US. The unspoken point was that his colleagues were busily reporting successes and perils to the director at staff meetings, while this man, graying heir to a swashbuckling tradition, ran a section that hadn't toppled a government in almost a decade. My impression was that in his condition, he could have been persuaded to turn his operation on London or Ottawa; the political stripe of the "target" was of next to no importance.

The episode illustrated another prosaic bureaucratic drive in the CIA, one that the current congressional inquiry has too frequently ignored. For all its arrogance and license, the CIA has also been, like other bureaucracies, anxious to cash in on the momentary policy whims of the White House, and there have been abundant opportunities in the last 15 years. The official who came to lunch ready with his mercenaries would have been, after all, serving "national policy" if he had been given a presidential go-ahead, which was not impossible. Similarly the CIA did not embark on its own on a decade of ruthless meddling in Chilean politics. That intervention proceeded from the paranoia of Presidents Johnson

and Nixon about the impact of left wing electoral successes on the fragile order in Latin America. Though it exploited and often distorted policy for its own purposes, the CIA did not originate the embroilment in Laos, the commitment to autocracy in Iran, the preference for repressive if pro-American regimes throughout Latin America and Africa, the myth of Fascist "stability" in Portugal and Spain.

As Congress and the public recoil from many of the CIA's past actions, from murder to political mayhem, they are also seeing a faithful, albeit sordid reflection of American foreign policy over the last quarter century. Nor is there any wonder that so many CIA officials, past and present, are said to be bitter about the current attacks on the agency while, they argue, responsible State and Defense Department officials of past administrations, men who sanctioned or applauded the most savage covert actions, now sit unsummoned and uncharged in foundation, law or Wall Street sanctuaries. It is in this sense too that the CIA must be seen as one more bureaucracy, part of a larger problem. For liberal congressional critics of the CIA, this unacknowledged dimension of the investigations will demand much more courage and wisdom than the burial of a discredited cold war zealotry among lesser, largely anonymous officials. To blame and purge the failed James Bonds will be too easy; to finger their numerous high-ranking Democratic cohorts around Washington at the time will test Sen. Church and his colleagues severely.

None of this should diminish or cloud the sinister quality of the CIA record. No government organization in American history has operated with such pervasive contempt for the democratic basis of public policy, nor, up to this point, with such shocking collusion from the Congress and the rest of the Executive. But the absurdities and dangers of the past will not be dispensed with until there is an awareness that much of the outrage is simply the way of life in Bicentennial Washington. The anxious claimant on dwindling budgets, the victim of clients and careerism, the leading but hardly the lone participant in government-wide disdain for Congress and obeisance to presidential power and secrecy, the CIA has also been a bureaucracy in search of a mission, not unlike NASA gambling its last thrust on the dubious scientific virtues of the Space Shuttle, or the navy hustling to extract from Congress nuclear aircraft carriers ("You can't strut on the deck of a submarine," said one observer.)

There will no doubt always be a need for a sizable national intelligence apparatus, in machines if not in men. But there seems no question either that with political and technological change, the CIA has lost a good part of the reason for its bloated bureaucratic being. And the real stopper to genuine reform is not some stentorian guard of cold war assassins, but rather what mires reform all over Washington—that legion of

little people, whose cloaks are knit suits and daggers are government-purchase cafeteria butter knives, with suburban mortgages, children in college, and lives invested seemingly beyond return. When Congress faces up to the humane purge demanded by that problem, it will not only begin to bring intelligence under better public control, but also will chart the way toward needed reform in other areas of government.

Failing surgery on the bureaucratic heart of the problem, however, the prospect seems inescapable that the CIA, like its fellow bureaucracies, will improvise new ways to justify its size and perquisites, to establish its worth, whatever the structural, nominal changes contemplated by the Ford administration.

The possibilities are interesting. In an era where scarce resource is power and where spreading international corporate control and price manipulations can topple regimes faster than troops around the presidential palace, covert action will turn from jungles to boardrooms and stock exchanges. It will no longer be the minister of defense or the police chief we must own, but the director of minerals or the economics professor close to the premier. And there still should be a chance for some old-fashioned fun: pipelines to be blown, refineries to be sabotaged, strikes and demonstrations to be mobilized. Even assassination might be easier to justify when that oil potentate is trying, as Kissinger put it, "to strangle the industrial world."

The catch in all this is that an anachronistic, overpopulated CIA finding its outlet in international economics will expose its own customarily unwitting public to reprisals in kind. There is no reason to assume that such a CIA will be more discreet or more successful than in the past, and there is ample precedent to predict that its newly powerful adversaries in the developing world would retaliate with embargoes and their own price fixing. The cost of CIA adventures then goes beyond national embarrassment to the pocketbooks of families in Duluth and Dallas.

Whatever the plausibility of this speculation it is clear that the world of the 1970s is far too diffuse in power and delicate in allegiance to afford the bureaucratic impulses toward intervention we have learned to expect from the present incumbents in the CIA.

The Congress now has the CIA in one of the rare moments of public censure and presidential diffidence in which genuine reform is at last possible. But the moment is fleeting. The investigation must dig deeper and wider than Congress has been willing to go thus far, and the senators and representatives must be prepared to confront not only generally condemned aberrations, but also equally repulsive products of business as usual. The banality of the CIA is a searing commentary on the whole structure of government. There will never be a better place—or perhaps another time in this generation—to begin the reconstruction.

Roger Morris

20 Years of Hard Labor

George Meany and the AFL-CIO

by John Herling

Not even George Meany would have thought he'd be holding on to the presidency of the AFL-CIO 20 years after the merger of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. But there he is. Just turned 81, he undoubtedly thinks more frequently of the inevitability of somebody someday succeeding him. But his zest for his job remains too great for him to let go. Still he has not brushed aside the idea of succession. From time to time he has reflected on the matter with some humility.

"I have seen people retire at the very top of their ability," he has said. "It's all a question of what you want to do and what you're able to do. Now what I've been doing, I've been doing for 50 years. I contend I do have experience. I don't know how much knowledge I've acquired from that experience. I feel so long as I can do the job, I'm going to try to do it. I've got my eyes open. If I see I can't do the job, if I feel that the people who head up all these unions that are part of the AFL-CIO feel that I can't do the job, I'll just say goodbye, and go on my way."

When Meany gavels the 11th AFL-CIO constitutional convention to order in San Francisco October 2, he will not likely be delivering a valedictory address. This will rather be a time when he will view with some satisfaction the two decades of his presidency. In that assemblage, he will see fewer of the old familiar faces, and many comparatively new ones of his own choosing who may be more beholden to him. With the exception of the venerable Joseph Keenan, the secretary of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, there is not a single member left of the AFL-CIO Executive Council that in 1955 brought the merged organization into being. Meany has outlasted scores of men who have caused him trouble of one sort or another.

Two years after the merger, under highly dramatic circumstances, he managed the expulsion of Jimmy Hoffa and the Teamsters Union. The reason—their refusal to agree to the acceptance of the code of ethical conduct instituted by the AFL-CIO. That was a time when large scale skulduggery and corruption in the Teamsters Union was being investigated by the Senate Racketeering Committee, headed by Sen. John L. McClellan, and its general counsel, Robert F. Kennedy.

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In the expulsion of the Teamsters, Meany, himself a member of the Plumbers Union, was hardly acting out the role of a dollar-minded business unionist, since the Teamsters Union was the largest dues-paying affiliate of the merged unions. This act caused great consternation among several of the building trades unions that had close functional ties with the Teamsters. But it gave great satisfaction to most of the former CIO unions, and in particular, the late Auto Workers President Walter Reuther, who had stepped aside as president of the CIO to make the merger possible under Meany's presidency. Ten years later, Reuther led the UAW, by then the largest union in the AFL-CIO, out of the merged organization for a complex of reasons based on policy and personality clashes between himself and Meany.

Thus in his first dozen or so years as head of the AFL-CIO, Meany lost both the most corrupt union and the one with the highest reputation for integrity and social responsibility. The two together made up about a quarter of the total membership of the AFL-CIO.

With the departure of Reuther went the most significant voice of the opposition to Meany or his policies. Meany had managed to outpoint and outfox Reuther in federation politics. He started off with a majority of the Executive Council and then proceeded to wean away many of Reuther's former CIO colleagues. For Meany, the federation was a full time job; for Reuther, with massive responsibility for the government of the UAW, the largest manufacturing industrial union, dealing with Meany had settled into a pattern of continuous frustration, laced frequently with rancorous personal exchanges. "Why," Reuther finally asked his UAW colleagues, "should we, the largest union in the AFL-CIO, pay more than a million dollars a year in per capita for the privilege of being kicked in the ass by George Meany?"

The fact is that Meany spent and spends considerable time on the care and feeding of the members of the Executive Council, one third of whom were presidents of former CIO unions. With his old AFL base secure and usually undemanding, Meany gave personal attention to the forms of social camaraderie, while Reuther, preoccupied with the vision of many projects and more austere conduct, had little time for small talk, gin rummy or massaging egos. Moreover, by this time the militancy characteristic of the former CIO had become fainter and men whom Reuther regarded as natural

allies could no longer be taken for granted.

With Reuther absent from his last AFL-CIO convention, Meany moved toward greater centralization of power. One of the first steps was to amend the AFL-CIO constitution by eliminating the executive committee of eight (made up of six Executive Council members plus the two top officers), which met bimonthly between quarterly sessions of the larger Executive Council. The move to abolish this restraint on his personal power was Meany's idea. The amendment was approved by the convention without a dissent.

Under Meany's leadership, the AFL-CIO convention, which under the union's constitution is the highest legislative body, has been steadfastly diminished in importance. It is not a rank and file convention. Its delegates are mainly made up of the executive boards of the affiliated unions, 33 of which are represented on the Executive Council by their presidents, and in one case by an international union secretary. Meany takes no chances in allowing the convention to take the initiative in filling vacancies on the Executive Council. He arranges to have the vacancies on the council filled by the council after a Meany-appointed subcommittee recommends a person whom Meany would approve. The council, thus, within the limits of chance, is a self-perpetuating body.

In the 20 years of the AFL-CIO, Meany has tried to make sure that the merged organization would not "part like a rope of sand," the dire prediction grimly uttered on Labor Day, 1955, by John L. Lewis, the once mighty leader of the United Mine Workers, who was barred from the merger proceedings.

Meany enjoys playing the role of political boss as well as of AFL-CIO president. The two are not mutually exclusive. He admires the man who can prepare the way for his own successor. As an example of what he has in mind, he recites the story of the late Mike Quill, president of the Transport Workers, who "got it ready" for his successor Mathew Guinan. He got it ready by making certain changes in his union constitution and by eliminating potential rivals through outright opposition or by the steady process of attrition. The preparation for a successor was also achieved through public assignment of duties, and letting the word out. The grapevine is usually the first line of communication in a large union organization.

To a considerable extent, this is now happening inside the AFL-CIO. For a long time, it was generally thought that if Meany should decide to retire, the man most likely to succeed him would be Lane Kirkland, 53, born in South Carolina, who has been secretary-treasurer since 1969, and before that, Meany's executive assistant. Kirkland's elevation from a staff position was a break with precedent. Historically the post he occupied is usually filled by a high elected officer of an affiliated union. A staff man first in the AFL and the AFL-CIO and for a while in the Operating

Engineers, Kirkland, a gifted speechwriter, has never been an elected officer, even on a local level, of the union in which he holds membership, the Masters, Mates and Pilots, now a part of the International Longshoremen's Association.

There was a rumble of discontent among council members but not loud enough to challenge Meany's choice, which Kirkland clearly was. Since the action was a surprise move, nobody was prepared with an alternative. But looking ahead, several Executive Council members insisted that Kirkland was not to be considered automatically the next president of the AFL-CIO. Especially vehement in his insistence was Joseph A. Beirne, then president of the Communications Workers and, 15 years Meany's junior, often mentioned as his likely successor. But even before Beirne bucked Meany in the 1972 presidential campaign for the latter's de facto support of Richard Nixon's reelection through his implementation of a "no-endorsement" policy, the CWA leader had fallen out of favor with Meany. Beirne's role as an opposition leader came to an abrupt end when he died of cancer.

In the past six years, Kirkland has played interior political games astutely. He is a shrewd appraiser of the strengths and weaknesses of fellow members of the Executive Council. He has firsthand knowledge of their personal and jurisdictional problems. His close proximity to Meany affords a strategic post from which to secure his intercession in their behalf, inside the federation or at the highest levels of government. Increasingly Meany calls Kirkland to sit in when important visitors come to see him, or if he wishes Kirkland to share in a new development. Frequently he proposed Kirkland instead of himself for membership on various outside boards and commissions, such as the recent Presidential Commission on the CIA, headed by Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, with whom Meany has had close relations over many years.

Moreover, through his administrative posts, Kirkland has built up a strong following among the AFL-CIO headquarters staff whose advancement he has encouraged. In building backing of this sort for himself, Kirkland has also given Meany the kind of staff support for which he is grateful as he paces himself more carefully with the passing years.

Perhaps the most interesting of the men around Meany, or more properly, in the wings of the new enlarged AFL-CIO headquarters—more than twice its former size—is Thomas Donahue, Meany's executive assistant. In his middle 40s, Donahue has undertaken many jobs entrusted to him by Meany, especially those directly related to internal AFL-CIO problems. In a job which normally could generate hostility, his remarkable diligence and tact are matched by the regard in which he is held throughout the federation. Quite obviously, without Meany's complete trust, he could not perform as effectively as he does. His trade union career began in what is now the Service

Employees International Union in New York. He became a lawyer, was Assistant Secretary of Labor under Labor Secretary Willard Wirtz, after he resumed his post as a vice president of his union. From there, Meany plucked him to his present job. He thus combines experience as a union officer, staff man and also government service. In dealing with the burgeoning interests of organized labor, Donahue's abilities are regularly given a strenuous workout.

So, if one wonders how Meany stays on top of his job despite his age, the answer lies in part in the quality of a staff that began to develop competence to the degree that Meany learned to give it his confidence.

As years went on, Meany also became more confident in his handling, if not the management, of the press. He has revealed in public what was known in private, an ability to deliver crusty, half-funny one-liners in response to reporters' questions, some of which neither he nor his staff could have anticipated.

He is capable of turning around on a dime. Sometimes on important issues. For example, after the 1972 presidential campaign, Sen. Henry (Scoop) Jackson was the favorite of the Meany court. Meany and Jackson, directly and through staff, were in regular touch. For one thing both Meany and Jackson were the most vigorous of the Cold War liberals. Jackson's identification with Jewish interests brought him an emotional political response that sat well with Meany. Tied to that, moreover, the investigation by Jackson's Senate committee on the energy crisis and the Arab oil embargo gave him a strong billing in all labor meetings. He and Meany also seemed to agree on the meaning of détente. Jackson, to Meany's pleasure, had maintained that any concessions to the Soviet Union should be hitched to an agreement that would permit Jews to emigrate freely from the USSR. Jackson gave Meany his assurance that this bargain would be carried out. But it wasn't. Meany felt betrayed. He turned on Jackson as if he had been caught in some heinous offense. Almost overnight Jackson was banished.

Knowing that Meany might change his mind in a 180 degree turn, a reporter asked him under what conditions would he change his mind about Jackson. Meany replied, "That's something I'll have to sleep on." Reporter: "What would you expect to find under your pillow in the morning?" Meany: "A switchhitter."

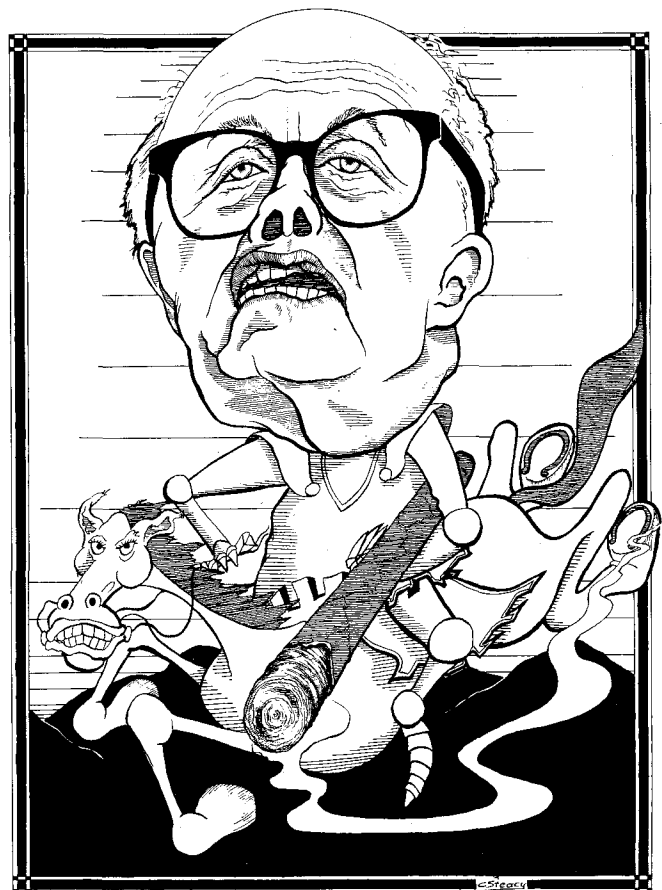
As indicated earlier, Meany himself can bat either way. On Richard Nixon, for example, he fluctuated from year to year. On Labor Day, five years ago, President Nixon, with the happy connivance of Meany and Kirkland, threw a lavish White House dinner for Meany and the Executive Council members and wives, most of whom attended the gala event, which was complete with a military review on the White House grounds. Meany was in seventh heaven. He felt no pain. He defended Richard Nixon against his critics throughout the years. He placed his hand on Nixon's shoulder. "They call him Tricky Dicky—well, let me tell

you, there was a man named Franklin Roosevelt who once sat here, and he was capable of quite a few tricks himself." As several council members remarked later, "That comparison was too much to pay for a meal." But Meany loves a lord, and the gastric juices, if properly stimulated do tend to distort reality.

The next year, when Nixon accepted at the last minute the usual formal invitation to the President of the United States to address the AFL-CIO convention (this year President Ford addressed the Building and Construction Trades September 22), Meany could hardly refrain from treating Nixon derisively after the latter's inept appearance. Yet the following year, a few days after the Executive Council was cajoled into a "no-endorsement" posture in the presidential campaign, he was out playing golf with Nixon, Secretary of the Treasury George Shultz and Secretary of State William Rogers. "It's nobody's damn business who I play golf with," he said hotly.

Then, a few months ago, he shocked his followers by remarking on Dick Cavett's show that "If I knew then what I know now, I would have been against the Vietnam war." In the meantime for at least a decade before, he had scorched union delegates who sought a clarification of the issues in Vietnam as being dupes of Communists or associated with kooks. But Meany has not publicly altered his opinion of those who were right when he was wrong.

Without knowing whether he has again changed his mind, his fellow trade unionists know him as the



toughest of the cold warriors. Who would have thought that George Meany, the Bronx plumber, and Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the Nobel laureate, would have been locked in fraternal embrace in detestation of détente as it is now practiced—against leaders of both their countries, Leonid Brezhnev and Gerald Ford.

"Détente today is a fraud," Meany said. "I would like to see genuine cooperation. But we don't have anything like that at all. We carry out our part of it. I'm for real détente and Mr. Solzhenitsyn is for genuine détente. He said so quite plainly. He is not for confrontation with the Soviet Union. He's a man of peace, not a man of violence." He defends his Nobel laureate against criticism as if he were a craft unionist being attacked by intellectuals.

Along with harnessing the passionate rhetoric and dramatic presence of Solzhenitsyn, Meany has been able to mobilize economic troops of some consequence in the shape of the maritime unions, notably the International Longshoremen's Association, headed by AFL-CIO Vice President Thomas W. (Teddy) Gleason, who never fails to respond when Meany calls. For years, Gleason had the boycott on the ready to withhold the labor of his membership along the Atlantic, and Gulf and Great Lakes coasts. His boycott power, or the threat of its use, has long been the not so secret weapon of George Meany for the implementation of George Meany's foreign policy. When he and his fellow unionists in the maritime trades announced their intention to refuse to load American wheat bound for the Soviet Union, Meany declared bluntly that "foreign policy is too damn important to be left to the Secretary of State." But he cannily went on to link this statement with an expression of concern for trade union and consumer interests. He said: "Very simply, we are not going to load any grain to the Soviet Union unless and until a policy is set forth and agreed to that will protect the American consumer and also the American shipping interests."

Although the response to this defiance of government policy was a court order against the boycott, President Ford readily understood that court writs don't load ships. He acknowledged Meany's power by dispatching his pragmatic Labor Secretary John T. Dunlop, a trade union sophisticate, to find a way out. Ford was not about to breathe hard back at Meany especially when the price of bread was about to rise with the export of American wheat. Dunlop, without being told, knew two things: if the Longshoremen's contract calls for the dockworkers to load, in due time they will load. But he also knows that there is deep dissatisfaction with the failure of American shipping and seamen to participate in the transport of wheat. Under the 1972 wheat agreement, American ships were supposed to carry one-third of American wheat going to the USSR. But according to labor sources, only 11 percent of the wheat went over in American

bottoms.

The past two years have seen Meany in a period of intense advocacy. He has never been more emphatic, more withering in his onslaught on the administration failure to cope with the recession, the unprecedentedly high unemployment and double digit inflation. Over TV, before congressional committees and a variety of outside organizations, he has been unrelenting in pressing labor's position. He has proved himself a fast absorber of facts and figures furnished by Nat Goldfinger, the federation's economics and research director, and he throws them at administration leaders like a guerrilla tossing Molotov cocktails. Throughout it all, he carries on with a "father knows best" attitude. He doesn't favor displays of militancy. They lead to trouble. They are apt to be untidy.

He thinks *his* tactics are best. For that reason, he has opposed demonstrations of the unemployed, even when they are organized by responsible trade unionists. Last April, for example, he opposed the mobilization of the unemployed in Washington, under the leadership of the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department. This is headed by Steelworkers' President I.W. Abel. Actually, Abel, the head of the largest AFL-CIO union, was not so enamored of the idea of bringing 60,000 or more union members to Washington to protest the continuing unemployment and administration policies. But the leadership of the IUD responded to the pressure from below of unions like the State, County and Municipal Employees, the International Union of Electrical Workers, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, as well as groups in his own union. Outside the AFL-CIO, the United Auto Workers, which held an impressive unemployed demonstration in Washington a few months before, gave its support to this one.

Despite Meany's displeasure (he had asked Abel, "How the hell did you let this happen?"), the stands at Washington's RFK Stadium were packed. At the AFL-CIO headquarters, fully half of the lower staff levels had worked with furious dedication to make a success of the rally. After the crowd gathered, however, as Meany predicted, a flurry of small groups scampered onto the field and the scheduled speeches were interrupted. The breakup of the meeting gave some a certain satisfaction. They trotted around with an "I told you so look," confidently anticipating that this too would be Meany's posture. Not so! Meany did the unexpected. Monday after the demonstration, he congratulated all involved for the success of the rally, and regarded the efforts to break it up as of no consequence. Meany had decided to join his troops.

More than once, Meany is reminded that during his presidency, the nation's two largest unions parted from the merged federation. (The third, the United Mine Workers, never was part of the AFL-CIO.) These make up about one quarter of the AFL-CIO present membership. The loss of about three and a half million

workers is no mark of success. But Meany has no regrets about the loss of the Teamsters.

In a recent TV show with Irv Kupcinec of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, this exchange took place:

Kup: Organized labor represents a total of about 25 percent of the workers of the nation. Three giant organizations are not part of the House of Labor—the Teamsters, the Mine Workers and the UAW.

Meany: (testily, ironically) Isn't it strange that we get along so well under these circumstances?

Kup: Is there any talk about reaffiliation among these three with the AFL-CIO?

Meany: I haven't heard any, no.

Kup: Would you welcome their return?

Meany: I would welcome the Auto Workers.

Kup: Only the Auto Workers?

Meany: I didn't say only the Auto Workers. I said I would welcome the Auto Workers and I would welcome the Miners and I would not welcome the Teamsters.

Kup: "Of course you are responsible for their disaffiliation because of Jimmy Hoffa . . .

Meany: (huffily) I wasn't responsible for their *disaffiliation* . . . I kicked them out along with my colleagues on the Executive Council . . . They didn't disaffiliate. We kicked them out by a constitutional majority of more than two thirds of the convention. We kicked them out because they refused to abide by our constitution. They haven't improved.

Kup: Even with Hoffa out of the picture, they haven't improved?

Meany: No, no.

In contrast, to Meany the return of the Auto Workers to the AFL-CIO would be to Meany a matter of personal satisfaction as well as organizational advantage. When the UAW left the AFL-CIO seven years ago, Meany sought to attribute the divorce to Walter Reuther's personal pique. Reuther preferred to emphasize policy differences. Now with the Vietnam war over and Leonard Woodcock, the UAW president, Meany could stress to his own satisfaction the diminution of differences between the two organizations. At one stage, Woodcock was attracted to the opinion—which Reuther long held—that if it were at all possible there ought to be a single trade union center in which the UAW could play an influential role.

The return of the UAW would redound to the prestige of the AFL-CIO. There would also undoubtedly be the practical consideration that reunification would bring almost two million dollars in per capita dues payments every year into the federation coffers. But such matters and Meany's motives aside, several union leaders inside the AFL-CIO, like Jerry Wurf, president of the State, County and Municipal Employees, as well as Floyd (Red) Smith and Bill Winpisinger, president and general vice president of the Machinists, and Paul Jennings of the International Union of

Electrical Workers would regard UAW's presence within the AFL-CIO a coefficient of expansion of the liberal influence in that body. So, it is believed, might other unions like the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union and the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, with their new leadership, the Textile Workers, headed by Sol Stetin, the Graphic Arts International Union, headed by Kenneth Brown, Al Gropson of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union, and Dan Conway, president of the Bakery and Confectionary Workers Union.

Aside from an improved mood in the federation, the feeling grew that the UAW presence could influence the choice of the next AFL-CIO president. Understanding all this, Meany is willing to take his chances, confident in his capacity to shape federation decisions, especially on the Executive Council level.

But UAW reaffiliation is not yet close at hand. Many influential leaders in that union believe that principled differences on policy, organization and attitude, which led to the rupture with Meany in 1968, still remain. The past is not dead.

In the meantime, for the approaching convention, Meany has arranged to persuade several superannuated members of the Executive Council who are no longer presidents of their unions, to step down. He will drop those men who are somewhat younger than he is, gently if possible. But the signals have already been flashed. They must now give up their status symbol since they are holding places that Meany will want to fill with less vulnerable candidates.

But something new has been added to the rising expectations among the female membership of the AFL-CIO. More than 25 percent of the AFL-CIO members are women. In view of this fact, Meany was asked bluntly—What about a woman on the Executive Council? He replied:

"We have some very capable women in our unions but they only go up to a certain level—to the union's executive board or head of a district organization—they don't seem to have any desire to further." (The Peter Principle?) "Now we have unions where a vast majority of the membership are women and still the vast majority of officers are men. That is not due to any policy of the AFL-CIO and in a good many cases not due to any policy of the unions themselves . . ."

He was pushed a little further by the interviewer: "Do you think, Mr. Meany, that if a vacancy occurs on the Executive Council—and several are about to—a woman might be chosen?" He pondered a moment, then said: "I don't know. I haven't given it any thought. I certainly wouldn't have any objection."

Who knows? By the time the AFL-CIO convention is in full sway, Meany's skillful manipulation may contrive to find a place for a woman on the AFL-CIO Executive Council. If that happens, it could be a token of things to come.

Arts and Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Dog Day Afternoon

(Warner Bros.)

At least once a week there's something in the newspapers that is believable only because it actually happened. And in the current strained relation between fact and fiction in our culture, fiction-makers of prose and film sometimes let life do the inventing for them, then use fictional techniques of conviction on the nearly incredible material. The producer Martin Bregman sponsored *Serpico* (TNR, Jan. 19, 1974) which was made in that impulse; out of the same impulse he now presents the much-superior *Dog Day Afternoon*.

Late on a steaming August day in 1972 two robbers held up a Brooklyn bank. (The picture guarantees the facts in a prior note; I remember the story but am relying on this guaranty of accuracy.) Before they could get away they were spotted, and police surrounded the bank. The robbers had eight hostages, so the police, joined by the FBI, began negotiating. In the course of the parleys it came out that the leader of the pair, a young man with a wife and children, was in this robbery because he wanted money to pay for the transsexual operation of another young man, a homosexual who was his second "wife." The FBI arranged for a getaway plane in return for the hostages' safety. At the airport the FBI killed one robber and captured the other, the leader. The hostages were unhurt. The leader is now in prison. The homosexual "wife" somehow financed the operation and is now a woman living in New York.

Three others who worked on *Serpico* are also involved here: the director Sidney Lumet, the editor Dede Allen, and the star Al Pacino. Their picture, though it runs a bit long, is generally gripping, sometimes fine, more often funny. And eventually unsatisfying.

The screenplay is by Frank Pierson, who wrote *Cat Ballou* and *Cool Hand Luke* and worked with Lumet on *The Anderson Tapes*. I assume that much of the dialogue was loosened up by the actors in performance in moderate improvisation, but Pierson at least provided some good scenarios. The script's structural defect comes from the fact that it was strapped to the story as it happened.

The photography by Victor J. Kemper, who made *The Candidate*, supplies just sufficient color (an important point), and Dede Allen's editing is one of the sureties of excellence in a wobbly world. Note, for instance, in the street scenes outside the bank, how deftly she works between long high shots and the close shots, how easily we are given the proceedings both as a news event in the world and as personal drama.

But the film's quality—and it has a quality, sad, desperate, ludicrous, entangled—comes from the collaboration of Lumet and his actors. First, right down the line, he has cast every part perfectly. Then, with his principals, he has worked with just enough control and enough relaxation to create tight naturalistic surfaces that evoke ambiguous inward states—a dialectic that parallels Allen's editing.

My admiration for Lumet and Pacino has had discernible limits in the past, but here, happily, I can change my tune. Lumet, at 50 much less of a show-off than Lumet at 35 or 40 (*The Fugitive Kind*, *The Group*), directs with simplified apparatus and deepened perceptions. Pacino is not called on here to radiate quiet power, at which he failed in both *Godfather* films. Here he is fortune's fool—a pawn who is being played at the same time that he thinks he's masterminding the game. This summer I went to a racetrack for the first time in 10 years, and outside the gate there was a tout selling a tip sheet for a dollar—eight sure winners. His elbows were sticking out of his ragged jacket, but he had eight sure winners. Pacino, about to lick his condition in the world and his personal /sexual troubles by being smarter than the world, has his figurative elbows sticking out. The pseudo-superiority, this pathos of self-deceived bravado, Pacino handles very well.

The film begins like a comedy of imbecilic errors. There are three bandits at first, but one quits just because he has "bad vibes." The second is John Cazale—Pacino's executed brother in *Godfather II*—here tacitly effective as an ex-convict who, in his quiet way, would

rather die than go back to prison. He and Pacino bungle a good deal, comically, as they line up the tellers and rifle the bank, even though Pacino has worked in a bank and has a lot of inside info. (Eight sure winners.) Luck and faulty forethought are against them. A bank shipment has left only \$1100 in the vaults. When Pacino cleverly burns the record book that lists the bill denominations, the smoke goes out an air vent and alerts a neighbor who calls the police.

Negotiations between Pacino and a detective, Charles Durning, immediately move on to the Treaty of Locarno level that these talks always have. Big crowds quickly gather behind street barricades. The talks soon become street theater, and Pacino soon senses that he has, perversely, become the hero of the drama. (Nicely appreciated by Lumet.) When his mother is summoned for a tearful, profane street scene with him, she turns out to be, with cunning aptness, Judith Malina of the Living Theater, noted for its street activities.

Pacino's wife has also been sent for. We get a glimpse of police calling on a fat emotional woman in a squalid apartment. But when a patrol car approaches, announced as bringing the wife, out steps an unshaven young man in a hospital bathrobe—a homosexual who has been in Bellevue with drug troubles. He is taken to the barber shop across from the bank that is serving as police command post. Then follows the high point of the film—a scene that is surely going to be a *locus classicus* of naturalistic acting for a long time to come—a

Films Worth Seeing

Coonskin. Ralph Bakshi's cartoon-live treatment of race-riven New York. Weak story, but bitter, bawdy, sometimes brilliant execution.

Nashville. The country-music scene as America in not-so-little. Smooth and clever enough, less deep than it wants us to think it.

Three Days of the Condor. Political thriller, CIA. Le Carré me back to ol' Virginny. Also NY. R. Redford capers through mechanically exciting plot.

The Wilby Conspiracy. Political thriller, South Africa. Fair-to-muddling plot, but three good actors—Poitier, Caine, Williamson—and some bright dialogue.

SK

telephone conversation between Pacino in the bank and, just across the street, his "wife," played nervously, delicately, free of cliché, by Chris Sarandon.

Lumet and Allen handle it superbly. It begins in the barber shop with Sarandon seated, almost incidentally, at the side of the frame, and the camera casually saunters up to him as the coils of his life have done. Gradually he is centered, as the shots of Pacino at the other end are cut in; and (under Lumet's good guidance) they play a moving scene of affection, resentment, subtle horror and farewell, Pacino's lonely brown eyes speaking almost more eloquently than his voice, Sarandon fighting for breath and life against the passionate suffocation of this madman across the street. They say goodbye, knowing they will never meet again.

The film's biggest act of daring is not in its use of homosexuality, which is no longer so great a novelty, but in the fact that it is proletarian homosexuality and that it is left quite unexplained. Pacino's blubbery wife, his strident mother, his stolid accomplice, all *accept* the fact that he has a male "wife." Theater, film and TV have dealt with homosexuality generally as the province of the cultivated and "artistic." But this is hard-hat country. Hubert Selby explored prole homosexuality in *Last Exit to Brooklyn*. Has anyone else? The matter-of-course acceptance of Pacino's relationship here is not a try for sensationalism nor a manifest of latter-day broadmindedness: it's an acknowledg-

ment of conditions that are taken for granted by that sector of society. No apologies and no psycho-sexual explanations, just acceptance in this supposedly puritanical class, that's the picture's quiet bombshell—assuming that the script is sticking to the facts.

Yet it's that very adherence to fact that finally makes the picture unsatisfying. Good art often mixes modes but always to some point selected by the artist. Here the final effect is only of a crazy series of events: the clownishly bungled robbery, the comedy of the hostages mixed with their real danger (Cazale is quite willing to kill them), the floppiness of the fat wife, the naked telephone dialogue, the snappy G-man ending—tonality after tonality tumbling by. But life, as has been well established, is no artist; and when Cazale's body is wheeled past Pacino at the end and he looks at it numbly, what are we supposed to feel? Pathos? Society's triumph? Something else? I don't know. The facts of the dog day don't clarify Pacino's character—as hero or social victim or moral anarchist or psychic deviant or anything else—and the script is bound to the facts. No matter how good a film is segmentally, if we don't know how we're supposed to feel at the end, it can hardly be called satisfying.

On the other and substantial hand, most of those segments are very good. If the whole is less than the sum of the parts, if there really *is* no sum of the parts, those parts are extraordinarily well made.

even today few will go the size of Marion Motley, who also played for the Browns—but none of them that fast or strong. When Brown pierced the line of scrimmage there wasn't a great deal anyone could do about it; most of the defense were too slow and the rest disinclined. Sometimes a knot of linebackers would form and writhe around him, and very slowly the knot would split open and out of this second birth he would move ponderously on and away. It was all heroics and very satisfying: knocking people down and sometimes out, selling the defense a leg; outracing sprinters who were born for the job. As I say, we enjoyed it without thinking too much about the inner meaning of it all.

This may lead to the suspicion of calculated simple-mindedness but it wasn't intended that way. Mr. Ransom liked technique and he had a special feeling for the Cleveland Browns.

At that time the Browns had a magnificent team, on its way, eventually, to the championship. Lou Groza played on until he was quite a bit older than George Blanda, who is today often thought of as the original Methuselah of football. Gary Collins was unbelievably good at catching passes—until he was joined by Paul Warfield, who was clearly better. The quarterback was Frank Ryan, who had a doctorate, I believe, in mathematics. He often played better than he should.

It's not easy to convey the Midwestern feeling about football. In the East about that time the Giants were the rage—they were in fact the great rivals of the Browns but admired for a different set of reasons. The Giants had a great defense lead variously by Huff, Modzelewski, Robustelli and Roosevelt Grier. The aim of any Giants-Brown conflagration was to see how the irresistible force would do against the immovable object. The Giants were loved by some, but not by us; there wasn't a great deal of fair play in the *Iliad* either. And the Giants were especially annoying in their choice of fans, who did not have much class. In New York brokers and film critics packed lunches at 21 and drove off to Connecticut to see the game on television at some motel. This was written up by magazines and generally thought to be significant.

The bad thing was that you had to watch the game while on duty, adding up points for masscult, for making it, and for saying hello to Ally Sherman. Something like eating chicken legs in public. But it was different in Ohio. That was, I think, because there were no

Confederates in the Backfield

Mr. Ransom and the Cleveland Browns

Some years ago when my children were beginning school we moved to a small town in Ohio. One of the first things they found out was that we had neighbors, quite old, who didn't mind them running back and forth between the two houses. The important thing was that Mrs. Ransom made the best brownies in the world and that Mr. Ransom liked the Cleveland Browns.

After a while I got to know the Ransoms and found out that it was true.

Before you know it I was eating brownies like a machine made for it and watching Jim Brown have some fun with the limits of mortality. Sundays were the best days in Gambier because Mr. Ransom's friends liked to help him watch the game. Nearly everyone who showed up could teach or write but those talents were felt to be a little out of place. Instead of talking we listened to Mr. Ransom and watched Mr. Brown.

There had been big fullbacks before—

values more basic than the ones enjoyed each Sunday. The day was good in itself.

Of course this behavior did not go unnoticed in polite society which was winding itself up the way it usually does. Football was generally thought of as synonymous with Woody Hayes and Ohio State: a combination of sweat, meat and arrogance. Now, very few people who saw the Browns with Mr. Ransom cared deeply for Ohio State. Hayes was fundamentally an unlovable man and in any case local patriotism was not the center of our interest. Comparing Ohio State to the Browns would be like comparing Jimmy Breslin to Hemingway. The reason we watched the Browns was that anyone could see they were the triumph of form. You couldn't run more gracefully or effectively, or slice the air into glittering vectors, or join body and will in a more material way.

I don't think a tremendous case can be made for the state of Ohio. The winters are cold and the summers are hot and the people tend to make virtues out of unhappiness. A case in point was Hayes himself; his own particular contribution to the culture of the West was the opinion that masculinity consisted of discipline and pain. In their apocalyptic forms, patriotism and religion. But he was and is more representative than most of us think. Kenyon College, for example, was dazzled by stability. Its students tended to be nice boys destined for the establishment, and its faculty was responsible for making them that way. Not a wrong one in the barrel, but all growing their own asparagus and making their own beer in the basement and holding forth, like the Duke and the Prince in *Huckleberry Finn*, on the beauty of it all.

Milton was the subject of some courses I remember and Thoreau that of some conversation I have gone through. But more on my mind were the dark comedies of Shakespeare and the poetry of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester. Mr. Ransom liked the Restoration, and helped to shape whatever views I was capable of bringing forth. In the middle of all that sainted normalcy he was cold and in a useful way without illusions. I was surprised to see how much he knew of Congreve and Dryden, and the intuitive ability he had to see under the poetry of reason.

There were pretty clearly two strains in his poetry and critical writings: the tremendous burden of participation in the Christian West, which was a moral imperative, and the understanding of

any individual human life on the terms of consciousness alone. So that one was a moral impulse, and the other being without moral passion—a paradigm of criticism itself.

Sympathy for the profession of criticism had to fight the dead weight of the English department at Kenyon College. Few there accepted the fact that Rochester deserved as much respect as Milton. There was simply too much piety about; and the faculty made the terrible error of having their lives influenced by their work. They liked happy endings, tended to think of themselves as the children of light, and acted accordingly. It was like teaching in a seminary. Mr. Ransom, on the other hand, knew a good deal about the children of darkness. Captain Carpenter lost everything—like Don Quixote or like the poetic imagination itself—in his acquaintance with the world:

*The curse of hell upon the sleek
upstart
That got the Captain finally on
his back
And took the red red vitals of his
heart
And made the kites to whet their
beaks clack clack.*

But love and hunger, after all, make beautiful dissections.

The work he did was implicitly a criticism of the good life as we commonly imagine it. Difficult, metaphorical, richly allusive, dependent on hard reading and the contradiction that literature usually brings in the expected place of affirmation. I was always fascinated by the difference between what people expected of him and what he was. No wonder he liked Jim Brown—the two of them made a set.

It would be a mistake to write of John Crowe Ransom as a Southerner or a Fugitive or an Agrarian. To my mind that would be like talking about Tolstoy and the Slavic Soul. Mr. Ransom summed up the adversary world of culture. In the middle of country comfort he wrote of the debate between soul and body because it was as real to him as to Andrew Marvell. He wrote of the death of Captain Carpenter and John Whiteside's daughter, and also of the mind that hears

*no stife or quarreling
As the birds and their wives sing.*

His essays were about difficult poets who gave us no peace, Eliot and Yeats and the late Shakespeare. He was more intelligent in a paragraph about Burke than others are in a decade, and he was

not worshipful.

He was a very sane man and the last of a generation. He left about the time of Edmund Wilson; and he was, I think, on the same scale as Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. They all understood history through locality or the spirit of place. Mr. Ransom lived in Ohio and liked the Browns; Wilson went back upstate; Faulkner knew enough to stay in Mississippi. We tend to think of Archimedes saying he could move the world if he had a lever long enough. Not many of us remember his saying that he needed also a place to stand on.

Ronald Berman

Ronald Berman, former half-mile champion of New York City, is chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Books Considered

Memoirs and Opinions 1926-1974 by Allen Tate

(Swallow Press; \$8.95)

Allen Tate entitled a previous collection *The Man of Letters in the Modern World*. But what man? How does a particular man get to be this admirable and necessary figure? In Tate's case the man of letters began in the blue-grass region of Kentucky. To use a locution of which Tate himself is fond . . . "but this is not the place to go into biography." Though in some very real and good senses an internationalist—through travel, conversance with a good many languages, through translation work and extensive personal contacts with European writers and artists—Tate remains a product of the American South, and his influence and deepest value to us are inextricably bound up with that region: its history, its culture, its religion and the values and frustrations accruing to these things. It is no accident that his most famous poem concerns a man gazing at sunset into a Confederate graveyard.

Though this is not the place (I cannot

resist the echo) to go into the poetry . . . except that of course I must, albeit only a little. For it is as a poet that Tate most vitally exists. The other brilliant writings have spun as circumferences from poetry, the center of the creative wheel. From poetry have come the literary essays and assessments, the social, historical and political commentaries, and the magnificent one novel, *The Fathers*.

Yet how and why, in "Ode to the Confederate Dead," did the final words on the page emerge as they have come to exist in hundreds of anthologies?

*You hear the shout, the crazy
hemlocks point
With troubled fingers to the
silence which
Smothers you, a mummy, in
time.
The hound bitch
Toothless and dying, in a
musty cellar
Hears the wind only.
Now that the salt
of their blood
Stiffens the saltier oblivion of
the sea,
Seals the malignant purity of
the flood,
What shall we who count our
days and bow
Our heads with a commem-
orial woe
In the ribboned coats of grim
felicity,
What shall we say of the
bones, unclean,
Whose verdurous anonymity
will grow?*

The language, with its stately, severe elegance, is something like that used by the generation of Tate's father, and in its heavily Latinate diction reminds us that a classical education was a prerequisite of the making of a gentleman in that pastoral long-ago. Upon this language is engrafted the modernism of poets like Tate's friend Hart Crane, with its insistence on connotation, but more especially that of T.S. Eliot. To cite but a single example of the latter influence, one has simply to look at the use of the word "only." The device of end-stopping a line with "only" is so closely to be identified as Eliot's watermark that the mannerisms of Eliot leap from Tate's page and all but rip your head off. Tate's poetry is an amalgamation of a very

great many influences, some contemporary and fashionable or at least interesting, some foreign-language—Valéry is a case in point here—and some from antiquity. What are we left with as a result of this process which has been necessary to Tate's poetic development? A style that is uniquely Tate's. Eliot said somewhere that the influences on his work were not to his knowledge the exact conjunction that produced anyone else's. Of course the same could be said of any poet, but in Tate's poetry a salient fact is that the approach has been singularly successful in forging an

weighed against these, and changes them by means of the disciplined imagination.

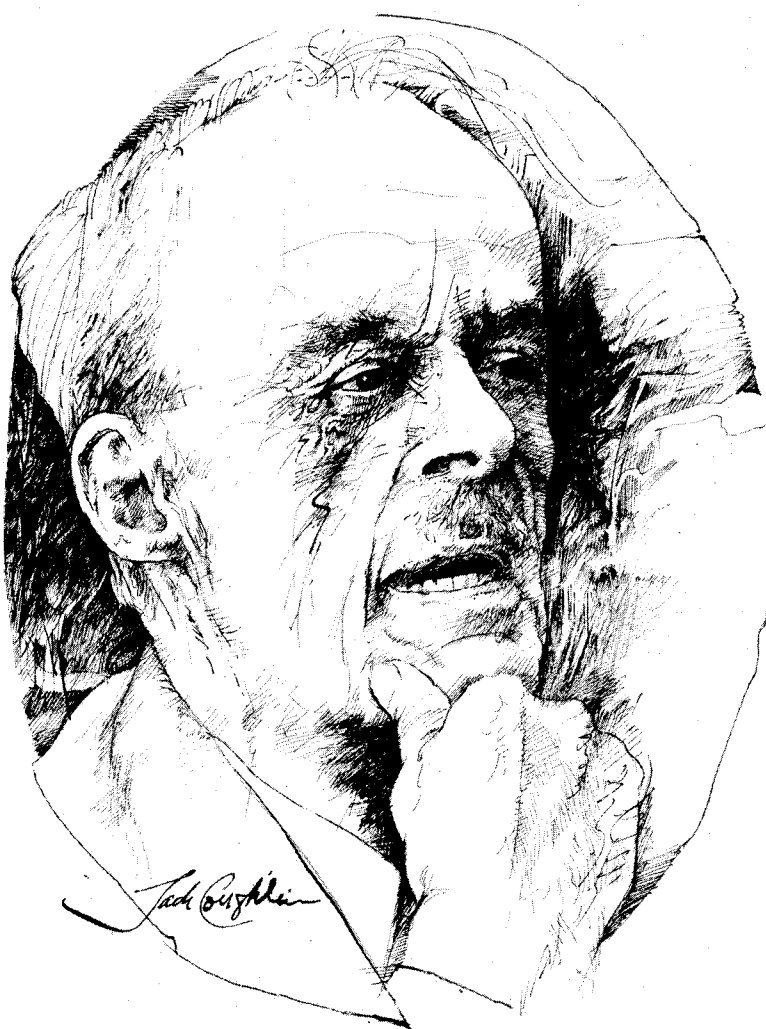
The Civil War and the Confederacy are crucial to Tate's view of history, which is to say of existence. Robert Lowell has written movingly of a visit to Gettysburg he took with Tate:

*We reach Gettysburg;
both of us too much the soldier from
Sourmash:
'I don't know whether to call you my son or
my brother.'
Ashtrays and icecubes deployed as Pickett's
columns:
A sloping forest of flashing
steel. You point:
'There, if Longstreet had
moved, we would have
broke you.'*

Gettysburg is Troy. A good civilization fell to the crass savagery of Achilles, and another good one fell to the needless butchery of Grant and Sherman. Thus Tate. Whether or not we accede to this interpretation, we must gaze into the Confederate cemetery with a new awareness of history and its tragic metaphors.

Memoirs and Opinions is the most pleasant of Tate's books. It is an odd word to use, especially by someone accustomed to 25 years of the author's oblique and sometimes riddling reserve. One is startled to find that on occasion Tate can be not only relaxed, but delightful. It is good to have his recollections of the Fugitive group at Vanderbilt in the late '20s and early '30s. I myself was at Vanderbilt wandering around the gentle campus

in a ragged and filthy fur-lined flight jacket like the ghost of a man whom the greatest of wars had somehow failed to kill. Donald Davidson, who remained a Fugitive in the original environment long after Tate, Robert Penn Warren, William Yandell Elliot and John Crowe Ransom had left, was my teacher as well as theirs. Tate's tribute to Davidson, couched as a book review of Davidson's poems, is extremely eloquent and moving, for the Fugitives conceived of poetry as a vital principle of both



original and easily identifiable style. It is a hard way toward originality, but with Tate it is startlingly successful. Some eclecticism is present in all of Tate, and I expect he would be the first to admit this. The fact points out, however, that the same preoccupations that permeate the poetry run also through his literary, cultural and social essays as well. His has been a life devoted to passionate classicism. He is concerned with the depth and consequence of history, and with the means by which the human sensibility is

civilization and life, and these remarkable men, who came together earlier by accident or fate, were undoubtedly the most powerful creative talents of the Old South. They looked backward with honor as well as anger.

What Mr. Davidson may want to restore, or not restore, or to destroy or create, is not the issue raised by a reading of these poems. What, in his poems, he is concerned with is the opposition of an heroic myth to the secularization of man in our age.

It is this secularization that Tate has spent his life opposing. The fact that the South, with its tragic, almost Homeric history, has been for Tate the focal region of his own life and work is not the important consideration. He finds, by having been born to a fortuitous combination of genes into a certain location, a certain historical background, into the bewilderment of time, that his situation has certain perhaps profound implications for every man in every place and every time. And they are more than implications; they are the basic questions, the possible solutions to the question of existence. How does each of us wish to live his only life? If we could find it, what would be the qualities of that life? Would it involve roots in a locality? Would it be solitary or communal? Or both? Would it involve religion, of whatever kind?

For me one of the most fascinating preoccupations that Tate has had over his long career is his obsession with the life and work of Edgar Allan Poe. Critics have been knocking Poe down ever since he began to write until the present, but when a man of Allen Tate's eminence steadfastly champions him, it comes to seem more than a literary affinity. He tells us that at one point he believed that there was a physical, a mystical resemblance between himself and the author of *The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym*. A poet is nowhere more illuminating than when he is writing on the work of another poet with whom he feels an affinity ultimately inexplicable. It is this passionate sense of identification, coupled with his learning and his ability to reason about poetry in strange, hitherto unaccountable ways, that make Tate's essays on Poe his best.

Poe's humor is not genuinely remarked upon, but it exists for those who have learned how to read him. In his story, *Some Words with a Mummy*, the mummy's name is Allamistakeo.

Is the South Allamistakeo? Is poetry? Is civilization? Is the world and the

universe all Allamistakeo?

Tate thinks not. He believes that the imagination, cultural cohesion, the sense of meaning something instead of nothing are the qualities which define us. In the breath-taking daring of his poem "Aeneas at Washington," he supposes that when Troy fell and Aeneas, bearing his father on his back, set out in bold enterprise to found a new life, a new civilization, instead of founding Rome, found and founded America. He stands looking up at the flood-lit capitol of the destructive bureaucracy that it all came to. Not far from Watergate, he says to himself:

*Stuck in the wet mire
Four thousand leagues from the ninth
buried city
I thought of Troy, what we had built her
for.*

James Dickey

James Dickey's new volume of poems, *The Zodiac*, will be published by Doubleday next spring.

Nicholson at Large by Ward Just

(Atlantic/Little, Brown; \$7.95)

Locked within almost every first-rate journalist there seems to be a third-rate novelist fairly shrieking to be let out. It is a familiar phenomenon, rather along the lines of an occupational disease, and if I pause here for a moment to dwell on it, I do so in part to put off the dread moment when Ward Just's second third-rate novel in five years will have to be discussed. It is not a prospect to be looked forward to.

Journalists tend to approach the writing of fiction in one of two ways, both of them wrong: contempt or worship. They either knuckle down to the task as if it was a job of work much like any other and slightly sillier than most—perhaps a cut above the writing of prefaces for telephone books but a far, far cry from an exploration of the real truths which only they (heh heh) are privy to—or else they creep toward what Henry James perhaps too majestically called *The House of Fiction* with the reverential solemnity of pilgrims at Lourdes. Perhaps the first method is, after all, the better one; at least it enjoys

the distinction of having produced a number of amiable, faintly salacious potboilers of the sort that are balm in Gilead on long bus trips to Akron, and because such books are usually long and, therefore, heavy, they can afterwards be put to useful service as doorstops and anti-cat weaponry. It is the second approach, the sacerdotal one, that sometimes makes the reviewer feel like the head ax-man in a slaughterhouse for Easter bunnies.

They have such high hopes—the Ward Justs, the Joe Flahertys, the Harrison Salisburys, the Jimmy Breslins, to name but a few. Their earnestness, their dedication, their devotion is graven large on every opaque sentence they write, on every paragraph that never seems to come out right, on every lugubriously cumbersome chapter as their books shamble on toward a Bethlehem forever beyond their reach. There is a kind of ghastly aura about such novels that reduces the reader to a state bordering on stupefied pity. True, Salisbury is very good with his battle scenes, and Breslin almost broke through entirely, first with the slight but street-wise and marvellously funny *Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight* and later with the opening chapters of *World Without End, Amen*. But then there came a moment, almost palpable, when he suddenly seemed to realize that he was on the verge of writing the greatest Irish-American novel since *Studs Lonigan*, and the knowledge evidently so unnerved him that he went scrambling back into the cloud-coocoo land of pseudo art as fast as his typewriter could take him.

As for *Nicholson at Large*, about the best that can be said for it is that it occasionally rises to the level of Michael Mewshaw on a bad day. As a novel it begins in the air, proceeds to Maine, and ends up in Maryland. In the course of these wanderings we are treated to a feast of clichés, a plot that could be comfortably inscribed on the back of a postage stamp, and a single burning question that I seriously doubt will set tongues to wagging from the Sunrise Highway to the Golden Gate. To wit: what the hell is going on here, anyway? A middle-aged reporter quits his job and takes up with a younger woman. Just is at pains to suggest that the two events are unrelated; unfortunately, he is at no pains whatever to tell us why not, and he never gets around to doing so. The affair ends for reasons similarly shrouded in mystery (Just's explanation for this event being about as clear as the words of a man strangling on false teeth) and

so, for all intents and purposes, does the book, although it lingers on for a chapter or two in a kind of twilight sleep. We are also treated to quite a lot of garbled vamping on the nature of journalism, government and Che Guevara. There is also a reasonably competent description of a funeral. It does little to clear the air.

The desire to write a novel may very well be a valid excuse for producing one. It is, however, no excuse for publishing it. Ward Just by any other name would be nothing but another addressee on a form-letter rejection slip. It would have been a mercy to us all.

L.J. Davis

L.J. Davis's most recent novel is *Walking Small* (Braziller).

The Actor's Freedom by Michael Goldman

(Viking; \$8.95)

There is probably no artistic medium in which the gap between practitioner and theoretician is more profound than in theater. That is why it is a delight to encounter Michael Goldman's *The Actor's Freedom*, a new exercise in dramatic theory that places its emphasis from first to last squarely on the actor and his audience, and on that peculiar and sometimes exhilarating event that is an evening in the theater. As a matter of fact, the very outlines of Goldman's premise suggest at least a partial explanation of what may terrify many academics in dealing with the live theatrical experience. He conceives the relation between the actor and his audience as one fraught with danger, for the actor retains the "strangeness and freedom of a man painted in blood and dressed in animal skins, howling at the moon, a shaman healing his tribe by allowing himself to be torn apart and reassembled by the spirits who possess his body, the leader of the maenad rout who is at once a sacrifice and a god." That passage, perhaps slightly purple (and therefore not characteristic of Goldman's style, usually simple and direct), nevertheless indicates a view of theater rooted in immediacy and describing a human encounter, at once fearful and yet liberating, that pushes beyond *all* language, let alone the often hollow catchphrases of academic jargon.

Goldman, it should be said immediately, is not one of those critics who delightedly mourn the death of language in the theater and who believe that the triumph of the contemporary dramatic experience is the sort of movement-music collage that has engaged the energies of many experimental groups over the last 10 years. On the contrary, Goldman is a great respecter of texts, and analyzes a number of plays from *Hamlet* to *Marat-Sade* and Peter Handke's *Kaspar* with wit and perception. But he is always aware that language in the theater is a potential distraction from the "presentness" of the action, unless actor, director and playwright do their work extraordinarily well. "Each line of dialogue," writes Goldman, "must make up for what it destroys," first because "all speech tends to break us off from life in the present and set up another system of attention; it directs us to memory, interpretation, to other language." Further "all written dialogue, however colloquial, has been composed weeks, months, years before we hear it spoken—but must not betray this." Therefore great stage speech must be "condensing, intensifying"; it must "thrust forward psychic states and at the same time bring them into a focused scene" for in life "conversation and real change very seldom go together." Of the dialogue that meets these challenges are textual masterpieces made.

What these masterpieces do, according to Goldman, is set up a world recognizable enough to an audience to constitute a proper formally conceived

universe in which the leading role or roles may be acted out. And what does that acting out represent? Invariably, "some version of a half-allowed, blasphemous, and sacred freedom characteristic of the era in which the play was written." Here we arrive at the actor, who is at all times the focus of this book. It is the chances the actor takes with his own personality, his own selfhood, in portraying characters who in turn take similar chances within the confines of the plot, that lend the actor his half-revered, half-feared and envied position in the contemporary community. This definition transcends the actor as mimic, claiming for any good actor an energy which goes way beyond "the demonstration of what some real person is like." Such energy is "awesome and fearful" and for this reason Goldman refers to it as "terrific" energy. As for the audience's ambivalent reactions to the performer, they are caused by this energy; primarily because "the quality of being that an actor manifests in performance is by everyday standards not only unusual, but would in fact be quite disturbing, perhaps even frightening, if encountered outside the theatre."

But the energy of the actor is finally a phenomenon we admire as much as we fear, particularly as it is contained and channeled within the confines of the dramatic character he is bringing to life. Goldman's respect for the actor as artist rather than craftsman is a respect I wholeheartedly share, and his understanding of the profundity of the actor's art is the main strength of his book. If it

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—CHARLES R. LARSON, *The New Republic*

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is true, as psychoanalysts might tell us, that the actor suffers from an imperfect self-definition or "defective body image," if he has an inability to distinguish "self from other" and identifies himself by impersonating another, then says Goldman, that puts the actor at the center of the human dilemma, and makes him one of its best expressions; for, "the confusion about the self and about the body, the uncertainty that drives the actor toward his skill, is finally something all men bear, though the actor lives closer to it, keeps the wound open in order to heal it freshly in his art."

Goldman's view of the acting experience, and of the theatrical encounter itself, cannot be termed easy for the audience; and expenditure of the spectator's emotional, spiritual and intellectual being is demanded by the very nature of a medium that throws one "self" up against the "other"; those beings performing before us have an "otherness" we cannot totally escape, even if that otherness is confined safely within the world of a play. The simplest, most mindless Broadway comedy can become an agony of embarrassment and anxiety for us if an actor stumbles and falls, forgets his lines, becomes noticeably ill, or allows in any manner whatsoever his otherness to intrude upon the confined reality the play intends to make comfortable for us. That is why theater can rarely be relaxing the way movies can be and perhaps why it has become in our time a minority pursuit. The search for selfhood that Goldman sees both as the central dramatic impetus of any great character and the actor who plays him may answer a basic need in human experience, but man is quite capable of concealing that need from himself and treasuring the "deadness" of movie performance, with its attendant lack of social responsibility, over the "liveness" of the theatrical event that Goldman celebrates. This is not a criticism of Goldman's theory—he lays no claims for theater's mass appeal—but merely a sad reflection that the exhilarating dynamic between performer and audience that he describes so tellingly is a two-way contract, and that in a society trained to

perceive art as a passive phenomenon, the immediacy, the "presentness" Goldman believes central to theater's uniqueness may at the same time be its greatest threat.

Nevertheless the pleasure one has in reading *The Actor's Freedom* remains one's recognition of Goldman's intelligent, informed enthusiasm for the medium; what a rare treat to discover a perceptive work of theory written by a man stimulated rather than intimidated by an actual evening in the theater.

Arvin Brown

Arvin Brown is artistic director of New Haven's Long Wharf Theatre, and director of the current revival of *Ah, Wilderness!* at the Circle in the Square in New York.

The Great War and Modern Memory by Paul Fussell

(Oxford University Press; \$13.95)

One doesn't know quite where to begin to praise this book in which literary and historical materials, in themselves not unfamiliar, are brought together in a probing, sympathetic and finally illuminating fashion. It is difficult to think of a scholarly work in recent years that has more deeply engaged the reader at both the intellectual and emotional level. Fussell's subject is "the British experience on the Western Front from 1914 to 1918 and some of the literary means by which it has been remembered, conventionalized and mythologized." If, as he argues persuasively, "the war was relying on inherited myth," he is equally persuasive when he claims that the war "was generating new myth, and that myth is part of the fiber of our own lives."

Almost all of Fussell's previous work has been on English literature of the 18th century, and one would like to think that his study of Swift was of use to him as he approached the most Swiftian image of our century: the great line of trenches, extending from the top of Belgium to the border of France and Switzerland, infested with rats and reeking of shit, where a generation of young men were senselessly slaughtered. Fussell's reading and collection of material has been prodigious: this is

clearly a labor of love and hate, which has gone a long way past both the descriptive and analytic aspects of its foreground subject to an interpretation of our contemporary sensibility, the continuing legacy of the Great War. The brilliant manipulation of language combined with a desperation about the human condition that distinguishes the work of Heller, Mailer and Pynchon has its roots, Fussell contends, in the gallant, grotesque, absurd and ultimately meaningless "trench experience."

He leads one inexorably to this conclusion. Almost at the start of the book we hear the voice of Henry James in a letter to a friend the day after Britain entered the war in August 1914: "The plunge of civilization into this abyss of blood and darkness . . . is a thing that so gives away the whole long age during which we have supposed the world to be, with whatever abatement, gradually bettering, that to have to take it all now for what the treacherous years were all the while really making for and meaning is too tragic for any words." Approaching the book's end, we hear the interior musing of Brigadier Pudding in *Gravity's Rainbow*, as he thinks of Passchendaele—"The mud of Flanders gathered into the curd-crumped, mildly jellied textures of human shit, piled, duck-boarded, trenches and shelled-pocked leagues of shit in all directions, not even the poor blackened stump of a tree . . ."—and goes on to the coprophagous ritual with the Mistress of the Night that will ultimately kill him. There, freed of the inhibitions that had kept the filthy secret a "secret" for decades, the uncensored contemporary novelist is free to find an imaginative equivalent to the realities of what men were put through by their Yahoo generals on the Western Front: the plunge into the abyss.

I may be doing Fussell a disservice by speaking of his conclusions as though they were the substance of his book. In fact, while he does very powerfully, persuasively and properly explain how we have come to regard our world as absurd, teetering from one irony (a favorite, even an overworked word of Fussell's) to the next, he offers a meticulous discussion of British literature of the First World War and its extraordinary emblematic importance. Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves, Wilfred Owen, Isaac Rosenberg, Rupert Brooke, Edmund Blunden, David Jones—all the expected "classic" names are to be encountered, some in shrewdly judged formal studies, as well as other

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literary names, little known or virtually forgotten. And attention is paid too to the merely "ordinary" men, whose amateur memoirs, scores of them, Fussell has examined in the Imperial War Museum. Throughout he is himself very much the professional literary critic, aware when necessary of the artistic limitations of the work under discussion, but by the same token aware of how much of the best of it represents a deliberate esthetic achievement—how false it is, for example, to regard Sasson's fictional trilogy as a random memoir rather than a conscious selection and arrangement of material as in a novel; or to take Graves's *Goodbye to All That* too literally, rather than as the quasi-farcical tale it was intended to be. The book is full of sustained literary arguments, as when a convincing claim is entered for Isaac Rosenberg's "Break of Day in the Trenches" as the greatest poem of the war. At times, if anything, Fussell is a shade too much the "critic," and he seems to me unduly intent to make his analysis consistent with the critical categories of Northrop Frye.

It is, of course, an abundantly "literary" war he is concerned with, far more so than any other war of this century—in part, I suspect, because of the extraordinary numbers of potential "writers" who went off to the front to fight; in part because of the altogether traumatic effect of the trench experience—so different, so unlike anything anyone had expected, so painfully at odds with the myths that a generation of golden haired young men had been nurtured on. And then there was all that free-floating literary sensibility, an accumulation of centuries.

Fussell evokes the desperation and filth of the trenches with an agonizing fidelity, but he does not overlook the degree to which, ironically, certain niceties of British life were imported to the trenches: so close to London were they that the amenities of a London club, at least where periodicals were concerned, could be found in the officers' quarters; and the trenches were flooded not only with water but with books being sent out to the troops, most particularly *The Oxford Book of English Verse*. Echoes of Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth and others of the pantheon are to be heard in the prose, poetry and letters of the soldier-writers, and even in those unpublished amateur memoirs in the Imperial War Museum. Conventional flower symbols were much used, gay at first; later however they gloomed over, as the war went inter-

minably, bloodily on and the roses and poppies significantly darkened.

Fussell locates in the Great War a crucial transformation of vocabulary: the change from older words of heroism, romantically familiar to many through such works as William Morris' *The Well at the World's End* and the language of quest shaped by Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. The more fanciful use of language begins to fall away under the influence of the war—then as the horror intensified, romantic diction yields to euphemism. But, of course, the transformation Fussell has in mind goes far deeper than styles of rhetoric.

In his sophisticated and complex fashion he is returning to an older view of the Great War as the "knife-edge," marking off one kind of world and style (pre-war) from what came afterward (post-war); or as he puts it in one his less felicitous moments, "the passage of modern writing from one mode to another, from the low mimetic of the plausible and the social to the ironic of the outrageous, the ridiculous, and the murderous." Actually we know that the "modern" movement as such was not a post-war phenomenon, and had its beginnings long before the outbreak of the war. But it is hard not to agree with him that the Great War marked the end of innocence and encouraged the growth of the ironic mode. British "coping," indigenous as it was to the national character, was never without its ironic aspects, certainly in its traditions of understatement and phlegm. But the defensive, mocking way of regarding the world—the cynicism that by now is inherent in our own lives in all circumstances—is directly a consequence of the slaughters of 1914-1918, and nothing that has happened since has altered that strategy. "I am saying," Fussell tells us, "that there seems to be one dominating form of modern understanding; that it is essentially ironic; and that it originates largely in the application of mind and memory to the events of the Great War."

Historically, he is on solid ground: his detailed knowledge, his range, his humanity—all these make for a book of exciting connections which help one better to understand both the past and the present. Perhaps he does not sufficiently emphasize the greatest irony of all—that the war itself was so ludicrously unnecessary—nor does he make enough of the pleasure with which the outbreak of war was greeted, by the crowds in London and elsewhere. Graves's sense of being rescued by the

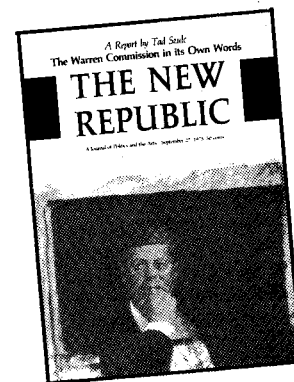
war from the dull routine of his life was not unusual; Rupert Brooke, that Edwardian Apollo, thanked God in a sonnet for having matched him with the glamorous hour. Those were the realities of 1914.

And yet society was already changing in Britain before the war began; after 1918 it was a changed world to which the survivors returned from the trenches, or rather, it was a world attempting to come to terms with the consequences of the war. Fussell himself does not deal with the social changes, many of them for the better which the war helped to bring about—an irony he might have savored. But his concern is with the essence of the war, its myth and its memory and how they were transmitted to us, shaping our vision of them and of ourselves. We try to keep up a brave, if self-deprecating front, but our basic view of the world reflects an ironic melancholy, and this exciting book—looking both backwards and forwards—locates the impelling force of that sad, skeptical vision in the British trenches on the Western Front.

Peter Stansky

Peter Stansky is chairman of the department of history at Stanford University.

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Reconsideration

The Poetry of Isaac Rosenberg

To many of the people reading these lines the name of Isaac Rosenberg is probably unknown, yet he is one of the handful of distinguished poets to have come out of England during the 20th century. Born in 1890 to impoverished Russian Jews in London's East End, he suffered the usual cramped and feverish years of immigrant youth—though, unlike most American or English writers coming out of this milieu, he rarely shows in his work any signs of strong affection for, or embittered rebellion against, the world of his parents.

In adolescence Rosenberg began to write verse and study painting. His gifts for both were large, but raw and untutored; patrons ranging from wealthy assimilated Jews to kindly Georgian poets, helped him; but a boy who must go to work at 14 cannot learn properly. "You mustn't forget," he wrote later, "the circumstances I have been brought up in, the little education I have had.

Nobody ever told me what to read . . ."

From the very start, Rosenberg was totally committed to an idea of himself. His struggle for articulation, that comfort of speech which native patrician writers could take for granted, absorbed his entire being. Perhaps in consequence, he seems to have been without external charm or playfulness; even, one suspects, without the bumps and creases of personality. His work shows the stamp of night-school culture, but often, thereby, a grotesque originality; he wrote English as if it were a new language. To become an artist meant for him a radical sundering from his environment, not as the familiar sentimental or sullen rejection of Jewishness, since Jewish motifs flourish in his work, but as a decision to transplant himself into the great tradition of English poetry. Keats staring into the sweet shop became a Whitechapel boy staring at Keats.

Sent to the Somme as a private in the First World War (the other English "war poets" were officers, gentlemen), Rosenberg fell in battle on April 1, 1918. Before his death he had completed a group of poems about army life, "Trench Poems," which seem to me without equal, for their kind, in English poetry.

Rosenberg would be praised in the '20s and '30s by T. S. Eliot and F. R. Leavis; first-rate critical pieces by Marius Bewley (*Masks and Mirrors*), Denys Harding (*Experience into Words*), and Dennis Silk (in *Judaism*, Autumn, 1965) would follow; recently Joseph Cohen of Tulane has written the most complete account of Rosenberg's life (Basic Books; \$12.50); but the poems themselves—all together filling a small book and the best of them a few pages—have never held the attention of readers as have the war writings of Rupert Brooke, Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen. No glamorous fatality hangs over Rosenberg's head. He was just a clumsy, stuttering Jewish doughboy.

Rosenberg's early poems are thick with the language of Shakespeare and Keats, also with pre-Raphaelite decoration. These speak more of an overmastering intent to become a poet, a need to overcome a scrappy education through fierce appropriations, than they do of the usual borrowings and discipleship. The style of these early poems ranges from heaving rhetoric to romantic lyricism, but what marks Rosenberg as a significant writer at this point is just those barbarisms of phrasing such Georgian friends as Gordon Bottomley and Edward Marsh found hard to take. The early Rosenberg is always driving

himself to say more than he has to say, because he thinks poets must speak to large matters. Later he learns that in a poppy in the trenches or a louse in a soldier's shirt, there is enough matter for poetry.

I find it a cause for wonderment that Rosenberg escaped from or banished the immigrant Yiddish culture in which he was formed. An early "Ballad of Whitechapel" reads like a bad translation of the "sweatshop" Yiddish poets starting to write in London and New York during the 1890s; it is one of the few instances where Rosenberg is content with pathos. He seems to have decided not to confront directly that tract of adolescent experience which has obsessed so many Jewish writers. Though the sensibility of humanist *Yiddishkeit* enclosed his youth, he simply ignored it in his work. When he does turn to Jewish motifs, they are drawn from Biblical sources but in a manner oddly abstract, even mythical. His verse play, "Moses," ranges from a surplus of rant to glimmers of sublimity; it launches a vision of Jewish rebirth (Moses, he said, "symbolizes the fierce desire for virility and original action"); but it is less the projected rebirth of a nation than a summoning of energies for self-assertion. For Rosenberg's poetry—this helps distinguish it from the other "war poets"—is marked by a strong prophetic urge which he could never quite bring under control or into focus. At best, it leads him to a recognition that he is living in a moment of historical disintegration. The prophet straining to break out in his poems, half ancient thunderer and half modern seer, can be heard in these lines of "Moses":

*I am sick of priests and forms,
This rigid dry-boned refinement.
As ladies' perfumes are
Obnoxious to stern natures,
This miasma of a rotting god
Is to me.
Who has made of the forest a park?
Who has changed the wolf to a dog?*

In the four or five years before going into the army, Rosenberg had begun to write poems in which this sense of historical disintegration, as acute in its way as that of D. H. Lawrence, would be realized through images not always coherent or settled but very powerful in fragments, stanzas, lines. Never having mastered the art of writing a good poem, he was preparing himself to write a few great ones.

One of the most astounding of these earlier poems is "The Female God,"

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Goya-like dark brilliance, it must be quoted entirely:

*Nudes—stark and glistening,
Yelling in lurid glee. Grinning faces
And raging limbs
Whirl over the floor on fire.
For a shirt verminously busy
Yon Soldier tore from his throat, with
oaths
Godhead might shrink at, but not the lice.
And soon the shirt was aflame
Over the candle he'd lit while we lay.*

*Then we all sprang up and stript
To hunt the verminous brood.
Soon like a demon's pantomime
The place was raging.
See the silhouette agape,
See the gibbering shadows
Mixed with the battled arms on the wall.
See gargantuan hooked fingers
Pluck in supreme flesh
To smutch supreme littleness.
See the merry limbs in hot Highland fling
Because some wizard vermin
Charmed from the quiet this revel
When our ears were half lulled
By the dark music
Blown from Sleep's trumpet.*

Reflecting upon these poems I have found myself turning back to T. S. Eliot's doctrine of the impersonality of poetry. "What happens [in a poem]," writes Eliot, "is a continual surrender of [the poet] as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality."

Rosenberg seldom reached, perhaps he did not live long enough to reach, that middle plane of achievement which entails the tokens of a formed *persona*. In most of his poems he fell short of a distinct poetic personality, and in a few went beyond it. In his early poems there is a false or assumed personality, a Whitechapel Keats; in the "Trench Poems" there is a transcendence of mere personality: no individual voice, no complaint, no sadness, no opinions, no irony, no rebellion, indeed, an utter submergence of the grief that must lie behind the poems, quite as if some

drained being were writing, rather than a mere afflicted man. This saturation in the life available to him, this submission to what little he could have, enabled Rosenberg to achieve the moral poise of an absolute dramatism, that creative faith in the value of rendering which is really beyond argument.

Rosenberg began with the common stock of Romantic diction, and then, as I hear it, borrowed heavily from Hardy. There are some lines from "Dead Man's Dump" describing corpses on the battlefield—

*Burnt black by strange decay
Their sinister faces lie,
The lid over each eye,*

*The grass and colored clay
More motion have than they . . .*

—which share the rhythm and diction of Hardy's "Transformations." In the end, however, one should acknowledge a margin of originality in Rosenberg's language, a fusion of ill-heard and thereby, at times, recharged poeticism with harsh urban speech. In a few poems, a moment of the world is held by the grip of truth.

Irving Howe

Irving Howe's *The World of Our Fathers* will be published in February (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).

The Back of the Book

J.M. Synge

As far as I know, the 1959 biography of John Synge by David H. Green and Edward M. Stephens (Macmillan) still gives the most thorough account of Synge's life. There have been a number of sketches and memoirs—by Yeats, John Masefield, Lady Gregory and Padraic Colum, among others—and an early biography in 1913 by Maurice Bourgeois, the first Synge scholar; but the size of the material, critical and biographical, is very small for one of the great playwrights in English. Even in the centennial year (1971) of Synge's birth, the best *The New York Times* could come up with was a short article called "Synge-Song to Resound in Ireland," that at least gave readers a clue toward pronouncing the man's name. Were it not for occasional revivals of *The Playboy of the Western World* and a few stubborn admirers, Synge long ago would have passed into the fog of the ancient Irish kings.

The account of him that gets to the heart of the matter is "With Synge in Connemara" by Jack B. Yeats, the artist and writer, Willie's younger brother. In this reminiscence of a walking tour Yeats made with Synge, Yeats tells of the joy Synge took in wild scenes, and describes the two of them in Bellmullet on St. John's Eve, watching the fire-play. Yeats later did a drawing of this celebration: a market place with townspeople in the forefront hurling flaming sods of turf, white against the

black sky. In the center of this drawing stand two observers, looking very much like Synge and Yeats, and watching with expressionless approval the kind of civilized frenzy of which they both made art.

Edmund John Millington Synge was born in Rathfarnham, now a Dublin suburb, on April 16, 1871. His father, a barrister, died one year later, leaving Synge to be raised by a powerhouse of a mother who trusted belligerently in the God of Protestant Ireland and who served as His emissary to her son, Johnny. As seems to be the case with many robust men, Synge was sickly as a boy. Alone most of the time, he developed an enthusiasm for natural history, and a skeptical attitude toward formal religion. He had lost the faith entirely by the time he entered Trinity College Dublin.

Synge was graduated from Trinity—by the skin of his teeth—with few prospects or accomplishments: prize exams in Hebrew and Irish; one sonnet published in the college literary magazine; a love of music, and the desire to become a musician; and a love of Cherry Mattheson, the girl next door, and the second of a half dozen women who were to be central to Synge's life. Whatever else Cherry had to commend her, she was a good and ardent Christian, a fact that alone should have told Synge their situation was hopeless. But Synge was a lonely man who could brood his life into

COMING

Germaine Brée on
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J. Hillis Miller on
William Carlos Williams

deep romantic pain.

In July 1893, he made a trip to Germany in order to study to become a professional violinist. He soon admitted that he had neither the temperament nor ability to be a performing musician, and returned to Ireland, making one final and unsuccessful attempt to win Cherry. He then returned to the continent, making the longest stay in Rome where he wrote translations of Petrarch's sonnets—a reasonable decision after losing his Laura. From Rome he went to Paris where he remained from October 1896 through the winter. Events in that season were to redirect his life.

The people Synge met in the winter of 1896-7 were among the most exciting in Ireland's modern history. *Young Ireland*, the political club they formed in the interests of Irish independence was



Drawing by J.B. Yeats

equally busy, passionate and ineffective. Maud Gonne, the mad queen of Irish nationalism, listed Synge as one of the organization's "most notable members," but Synge enjoyed the histrionics of Miss Gonne, Yeats and the old Fenian, John O'Leary, more than participating in *Young Ireland's* plots and activities. As Masfield, Yeats and Sean O'Faolain later said, Synge had no real interest in politics. Yet he was a patriot on his terms. When doing an article, "In the Congested Districts," for the *Guardian* in 1905 he said to a friend, "I like not lifting the rags of my mother country for to tickle the sentiments of Manchester." Synge wanted Ireland free both of England and her own parochialism. In the violent public reaction to his plays he was to learn that parochialism was more adamant.

That same winter Synge discovered *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis. The book is central to *Étude Morbide*, a strange autobiographical piece, in which a violinist contemplating suicide over the death of one of the two women in his life, finally turns from asceticism and rejects the saint. Synge never rejected the book himself. Quotations from it frequently crop up in his diary. His review of Geoffrey Keating's history of Ireland praises Keating by comparing him to a Kempis. Yeats notes that Synge planned a translation of the *Imitation* into Irish country idiom; the first part of the Saint's speech at the end of Act One of *The Well of the Saints* sounds like such a translation.

As a conduct book the *Imitation* was attractive to Synge because it reaffirmed his own detachment from worldly things. It also implied a Socialist millenium, another appealing idea that hit Synge just when he was steeped in William Morris, *The Communist Manifesto* and other French and English Socialist tracts. Still a more important implication was the availability of mystical experience. Synge was incapable of getting as fired up with Mme. Blavatsky and her crew as Yeats; but he read a good deal on magic and the occult. *Under Ether*, the account of a later operation, is full of mystical events, as are *Étude Morbide* and parts of *The Aran Islands*, particularly where Synge talks of the psychic memory attached to certain neighborhoods. Skeptical as Synge was about religion, he believed in miracles and in a cosmic structure capable of anything.

To verify that structure is the purpose of the *Imitation*. Behind its many prescriptions the book is a statement of supreme confidence in divine strategy: "all things are designed by God, and set in their place by the Sovereign Artist, who has left nothing disorderly in his creations." That Synge believed, though the character of this artist God remained in question. Every expression of inevitability in Synge's plays, every reference to Nature, every symbol of decay and regeneration attests to a system, but also to terrible consequences. Deaths of body and spirit fit a pattern. When characters such as the king Conchubor (pronounced Connor) of *Deirdre of the Sorrows* fall apart, they decay into Nature: "I'll walk up now into your halls," says young Deirdre whom he covets, "and I'll say it's here nettles will be growing, and beyond thistles and docks. I'll go into your high chambers, where you've been figuring yourself stretching out your neck for the kisses

of a queen of women; and I'll say it's here there'll be deer stirring and goats scratching, and sheep waking and coughing when there is a great wind from the north."

Only two of Synge's plays, *Riders to the Sea* and *Deirdre* have people dying, and every death, except for Owens' in *Deirdre* is anticipated. In *Riders* the sea takes the fisherman Bartley; in *Deirdre*, Naisi and his woodsmen brothers are hunted and trapped; Deirdre, the natural woman, falls into the earth. Owen appears too briefly for his death to be forecast, but for him too, life and death are accompanied by the same madness. Deirdre calls death an untidy thing, yet in fact death is a neat summing up in Synge. It is only untidy in the minds of the characters who would hold it at arm's length, and their efforts make the tragedies.

There is another aspect of a Kempis that could have affected Synge as well. The *Imitation* is a record of multiple lonelines. It was composed in a monastery by a man who designed rules of solitude to keep men apart from each other so as to nurture their souls that are separate from their bodies, and that trace their source to an incomprehensible system set up by an incomprehensible Creator who forbids direct communication and who is, by being unique, ultimate loneliness itself. Everything Synge wrote, including the comedies, reflects this desolation.

By spring 1897, Synge knew that he wanted to become a writer, a decision that his mother belittled. Still he had no subject. Yeats advised him to go to the Aran Islands where Yeats had gathered material for his novel, *The Speckled Bird*, and where the life was raw and elemental. From May through June, 1899, Synge made the first of his four visits to Aran, and wrote "A Story from Inishman." Between September, 1899 and the winter of 1900 he made two more visits, starting to pull together *Riders to the Sea*. In April 1900 he had begun collecting his Aran sketches into a single narrative, *The Aran Islands*, that he completed in September, 1901. Nothing he wrote more clearly shows the intense self-inflicted loneliness of the man: this brooding, educated member of the Ascendancy, speaking Gaelic in whispers, sitting at once among and apart from the lovely and brutal Irish peasants.

In January, 1902, Fisher Unwin publishers rejected *The Aran Islands*, and in the spring of that year two of Synge's Wicklow pieces—as strong and tight as

The Aran Islands—were also rejected. At the age of 31, Synge had sold exactly six articles, two of which were reviews. Yet he persisted; and in the summer 1902 his writing took off. Within three months he finished *Riders to the Sea*, wrote *In the Shadow of the Glen* and a first draft of *The Tinkers Wedding*. The following winter he was in London, and at Yeats's urging one evening, read his plays aloud to a group that included Yeats, Masfield, G.K. Chesterton and Lady Gregory. For the previous few years Yeats and Lady Gregory had been working to build a national Irish theater. After that evening they knew they had what they were after, and something considerably bigger.

(to be concluded in the next issue)

Roger Rosenblatt

Correspondence

The Magic Bullet

To the editors:

In one fell swoop, Malcolm Brigden (TNR Correspondence, Sept. 6) exemplifies some major shortcomings of too many members of the medical profession who apparently rely on pretty and expensive brochures from the pharmaceutical industry to obtain their knowledge of drugs:

a) *Ignorance of the nomenclature and chemistry of drugs.* Chlordiazepoxide and diazepam (lower case for each) are specific generic names for Librium and Valium, respectively, not the names of chemical families.

b) *The mistaken notion that a given drug is a "magic bullet" with a highly unique effect on one specific disease state or physiological process.* Yes, Librium and Valium are useful in the treatment of

alcohol withdrawal and *status epilepticus*, but so are many other agents that are the pharmacological equivalents of the sedative hypnotics, like the infinitely cheaper paraldehyde (for alcohol withdrawal) and phenobarbital (for *status epilepticus*). There is no evidence that Librium and Valium are more efficacious in treating these disease states (L. Goodman and A. Gilman, in *The Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics*, pp. 115 & 304, Macmillan Co., NY, 1970).

c) *The quaint notion that pharmaceutical companies plough extensive moneys back into research to produce new drugs.* The amount of money spent on research is a drop in the bucket compared to the amount spent on advertising. In addition, there are few new drugs turned out. Most of what drug companies produce are new combinations of old drugs or small chemical modifications in the structures of old ones. The benzodiazepines (the chemical family to which Librium and Valium belong) are good examples of that, having been discovered in an unsuccessful attempt to synthesize methaqualone, a barbiturate-like sedative hypnotic that is highly subject to abuse and which causes physical and psychological dependence, just as Librium and Valium do (F.H. Meyers *et al.* in *Review of Medical Pharmacology*, p. 222, Lange Medical Publ., Los Altos, Calif., 1974). Brigden thinks of these properties of Librium and Valium as minor ones despite the fact that these two drugs account for about 80 percent of all the sales of Hoffman-LaRoche and are two of the four biggest sellers of all drugs. If this huge volume of consumption of these expensive drugs is not a criterion of abuse, then what is?

George R. Peterson, PhD
Dayton, Ohio

Finn MacCool Reincarnated

To the editors:

My reactions to Mr. Klinkowitz's reconsideration of Flann O'Brien's *At-Swim-Two-Birds* (TNR, August 16 & 23) are mixed. On the one hand I am pleased that O'Brien's work is being examined and the article, given its academic context and execution, was quite good. On the other hand I think Mr. Klinkowitz reviewed the wrong book . . .

As one who has been expounding O'Brien's virtues from various small literary soapboxes and barstools for

some time, I had become convinced that his books were being condemned to misinterpretation and obscurity by some unknown and malignant force, possibly in the manifestation of a robber-baron style publisher who smokes two-dollar cigars, drinks distilled water and has daily briefings with hack writer-demons conjured up out of a crystal ball.

It seems I must alter the above image, for the restraining force of O'Brien's genius may be collegiate rather than capitalist. And since O'Brien is dead, I will resent in his place the inference that he is a secondary writer and that his other works are "minor." While *At-Swim-Two-Birds* is a great little book and deserves to be a stylistic inspiration to writers of this generation and the next, it is *The Third Policeman* which should be reconsidered as the major work of a long neglected but very major writer. It is high time that *The New Republic* or some other national publication contracted for its reprinting and the critical deliberations of its artistic statement.

My friend Finn MacCool, who is vacationing on the dark side of the moon, concurs exclusively with the above.

Rodman Philbrick
Editor
Huck Finn Review

Crushed Soothsayers

To the editors:

My brother could always dish it out better than he could take it. That meant he picked and punched at me for hours but when I retaliated with the same, he was horrified by the injustice of it all. Now I find my fellow Americans have the same penchant for hypocrisy. For years we kept Mideast oil countries on a tether, commanding them to give us the petroleum we needed at the price we wanted to pay, while our 400 horsepower economy roared along the interstate. Arabs paid us the price of their economic backwardness and political impotence. But now that our Mideast pet has broken his leash and threatens to throw a rope around us instead, we raise indignant cries of cartel monopoly and rank exploitation. Breast-beaters from the status of Secretary Kissinger on down to TNR writers are proving that when it comes to the great, international energy ripoff, Americans can dish it out but they sure can't take it

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Meanwhile official obfuscation of our predicament continues unabated. Writers like Charles Schultze ("Another Oil Recession") and Daniel Yergin ("Oil Double-Talk") assure us (*TNR*, July 5 & 12) that if only we cut the right taxes and make the right political deal, the American dream-boat can cruise on with full fuel tanks. These are Pollyannas with wrinkled brows. They don't yet understand that OPEC, along with other Third World compatriots, is tipping the economic applecart and that economist soothsayers will be crushed in the rush along with the rest of us.

How long before American policy makers grasp the truth of our continuing oil crisis: that the booming prosperity of post-war America depended on the exploitation of impoverished persons and nations, that we were living on borrowed time as well as borrowed resources. While Schultze wrings his hands over the possibility of "many more years of unconscionably high unemployment" no one dares point to the 30 of unconscionably high consumption which got us into this mess.

I find vague comfort in the Biblical imperative that they who live by the sword die by it also. For we Americans who lived so prodigally by the sword of imperialist exploitation now find the same weapon pointed at our own throats. And the OPEC countries are only beginning the rush to deliver the coup de grace.

Philip E. Bishop
Glade Valley, North Carolina

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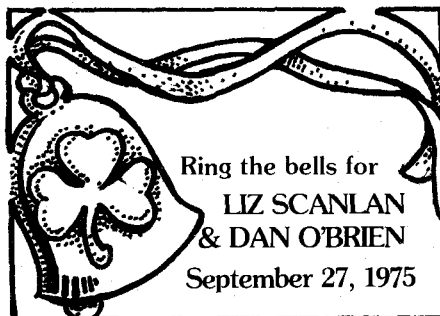
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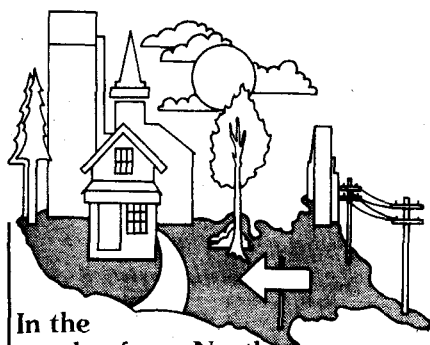
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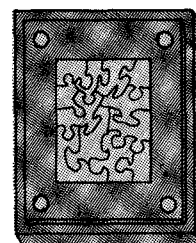
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